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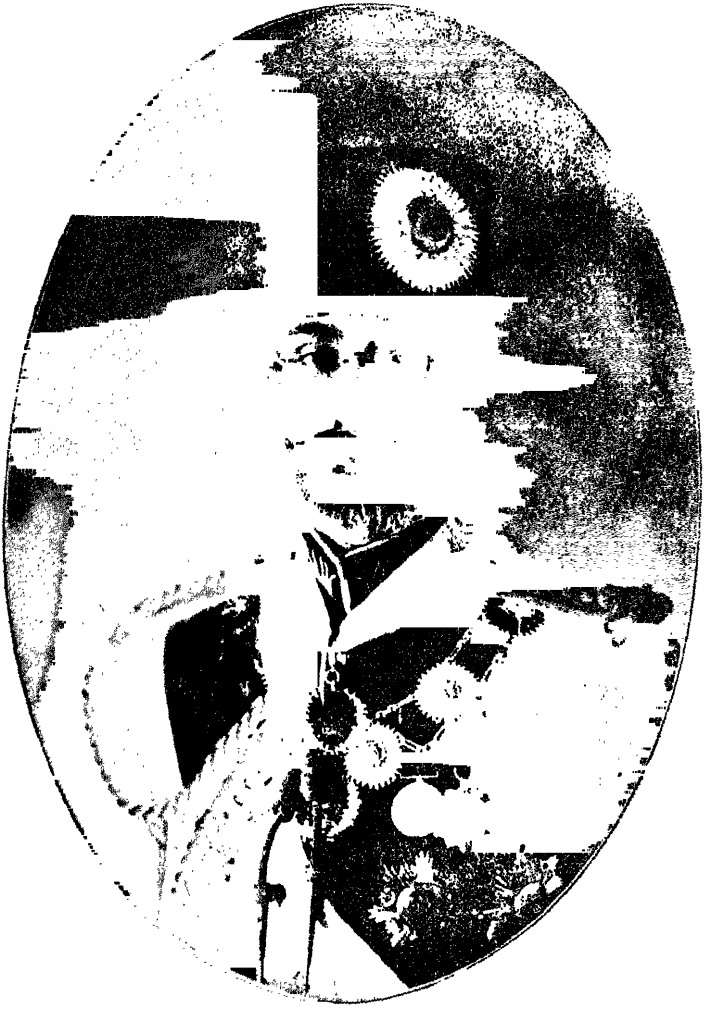

H. M. King Mohd Nadir Shah.

PROGRESSIVE AFGHANISTAN

BY

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PREFACE

There is no dearth of literature on the recent revolution and subsequent changes in Afghanistan. The publication of this book might, therefore, seem superfluous. But I believe the demand for a book containing facts as witnessed by a disinterested party has not yet been met. To the outside world the revolution might appear merely as an outburst of Afghan fanaticism and lust for war and the result of Afghan conservatism resisting Western conceptions of culture and advancement. But a careful study of the history of the past few years shows without doubt that the revolution was the natural outcome of a deep-rooted discontent born of maladministration and corruption.

My object in writing this book is to show how the famished and bankrupt Afghan nation was rescued from utter ruin and annihilation and brought once more on to the path of progress. Incidently, I have also made mention of the innumerable sacrifices made by His Majesty King Mohammad Nadir Shah

and his brothers in achieving this end. This was necessary, for it is by their labours that the exhausted and war-weary tribes of Afghanistan have been transformed within a surprisingly short period into a living and powerful nation.

A cursory glance at the present condition of Afghanistan suffices to show that the country has not only recovered from the severe set-back sustained by internecine war ; but is also advancing rapidly in social and economic spheres. Never before has the country been so justly and efficiently governed. Embezzlement and bribery, so common before among officials of all ranks, are now seldom heard of. The people are happy and contented. After several years of stress and strain they are now able to enjoy perfect peace and to look forward to a bright future.

It is not my purpose to vindicate any party. My object is merely to state the facts which, however, are so refreshing that a mere recital of them, without comments, would be a source of no small satisfaction to the well-wishers of the country. So quickly have the damages been repaired that one who

had witnessed the state of things during 1928 and 1929 would hardly believe that such a great measure of progress was possible in the brief interval. He will find that a new Afghanistan has risen from the ashes of the revolution. It has a Government which is animated by high ideals; it is ruled by a constitutional monarch who is at once an experienced soldier and a great statesman, and it holds out the promise of great development and prosperity.

MOHAMMAD ALI

Kabul, July 1st, 1933

CONTENTS

Chapter		*Page*
	PREFACE	...v—vii
I.	CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION ...	1
II.	THE REVOLUTION	15
III.	BACHA ADVANCES	27
IV.	THE REIGN OF TERROR ...	41
V.	ALI AHMAD JAN IN THE EAST ...	51
VI.	KANDAHAR	59
VII.	GLIMPSES OF HOPE	71
VIII.	THE JOURNEY	79
IX.	DIFFICULTIES	95
X.	LINE OF ACTION	103
XI.	PREPARATIONS—I	113
XII.	PREPARATIONS—II	121
XIII.	PREPARATIONS—III	133
XIV.	THE FALL OF KABUL	147
XV.	RECONSTRUCTION	167
	INDEX	227—232

ILLUSTRATIONS

H. M. KING MOHD. NADIR SHAH ...	*frontispiece*	
EX-KING AMANULLAH KHAN ...	*facing p.*	6
SARDAR INAYATULLAH KHAN ...	,,	7
BACHAE SAQAO	,,	20
THE BACHA AND HIS COURTIERS	,,	21
THE BACHA AND HIS BROTHER ...	,,	50
THE LATE WALI ALI AHMAD JAN	,,	51
H. M. KING MOHD. NADIR SHAH AND HIS BROTHERS ...	,,	72
THE PILLAR OF INDEPENDENCE, KABUL ...	,,	76
AFTER THE VICTORY AT THAL ...	,,	77
MARSHAL MOHD. NADIR KHAN AT BOMBAY	,,	80
SARDAR SHAH WALI KHAN AND SARDAR SHAH MOHMUD KHAN IN THE SOUTH	,,	81
MAP SHOWING THE LINE OF ACTION OF H. M. KING MOHD. NADIR SHAH FROM KHOST TO KABUL	,,	102
H. M. KING MOHD. NADIR SHAH WITH H. R. H. PRINCE MOHD. ZAHIR KHAN	,,	146

RECEPTION OF MARSHAL MOHD. NADIR KHAN IN KABUL ... *facing p.* 162
THE MARSHAL IN THE SALAM KHANA, KABUL ... ... ,, 163
OPENING CEREMONY OF THE NIJAT-I-WATAN CELEBRATIONS, 1932 ... ... ,, 166
AFGHAN ARTILLERY ... ,, 167
HOCKEY MATCH, MILITARY CLUB *v.* BRITISH LEGATION, INDEPENDENCE DAY, 1932 ... ,, 170
HOCKEY WINNERS, INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS, 1932 ... ,, 171
AN AFGHAN REGIMENT ... ,, 174
A MILITARY REVIEW BY H. M. KING MOHD NADIR SHAH ... ,, 175
THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, NEW BUILDING ... ... ,, 178
FAWAID-I-AMA (P.W.D.) MINISTRY, KABUL ... ... ,, 179
AN AFGHAN LANCER ... ,, 182
AN AFGHAN SOLDIER ... ,, 183
AFGAN STUDENTS IN TURKEY ... ,, 186
MEDICAL COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH THEIR PRINCIPAL IN THE CENTRE ... ... ,, 187

THE SURKHAB DAM, LOGAR ... *facing p.* 219
THE NEW CUSTOMS HOUSE, KABUL ,, 222
THE DAIRY FARM, ALIABAD ... ,, 223
THE MILITARY CLUB, WITH THE NEW CANTONMENT IN THE BACKGROUND ... ... ,, 224
THE CANTONMENT MOSQUE ... ,, 225
THE KARGHAH DAM, NEAR KABUL ,, 226
THE KHARWAR DAM ... ... ,, 227

PROGRESSIVE AFGHANISTAN

MEMBERS OF THE AFGHAN PARLIAMENT, 1932 ... ... *facing p.* 190
HIS MAJESTY'S GUARD OF HONOUR, WITH THE COMMANDANT SARDAR ASADULLAH KHAN IN THE CENTRE ... ... ,, 191
MILITARY CADETS, 1933 ... ,, 194
H. M. KING MOHD. NADIR SHAH AT THE NEW MILITARY COLLEGE CONSTRUCTIONS, BALA HISAR, KABUL ... ... ,, 195
A PORTION OF THE NEW BAZAAR ,, 198
DARRAH-I-SHIKARI ROAD ... ,, 199
FOOTBALL WINNERS, INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS, 1932 ,, 202
BOY SCOUTS, 1933 ... ... ,, 203
THE REFIQI SANATORIUM (1933) ,, 206
THE ORPHANAGE ... ... ,, 207
THE ARTS SCHOOL, KABUL ... ,, 210
HURDLES RACE, INDEPENDENCE DAY, 1932 ... ... ,, 211
READY FOR GYMNASTICS, INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS, 1932 ... ... ,, 214
GYMNASTICS, INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS, 1932 ... ,, 215
THE SARACHA BRIDGE, JALALABAD ,, 218

CHAPTER I

Causes of the Revolution

No book on modern Afghanistan can afford to ignore the recent revolution (1928-1929), when a notorious thief and robber, by a combination of circumstances, became the ruler of this land of the brave and warlike Afghans. It seems, therefore, only appropriate to begin our story with a *resume* of the causes which made that revolution possible. It was in February 1919, that His Majesty Ameer Habib Ullah Khan was assassinated near Jalalabad, the winter head-quarters of the Ameer, about hundred miles east of Kabul. At his death, his younger brother, Sardar Nasar Ullah Khan was proclaimed King and was generally accepted by the people as their ruler. Prince Amanullah Khan, the third son of Ameer Habib Ullah Khan, was at the time regent in Kabul. Young and ambitious as he was, he took advantage of the opportunity to realize his long-cherished dreams. The army in those days was ill-fed, badly clothed and poorly

paid. He began by making large promises of higher salaries and special rewards, and had no difficulty in winning over the simple-minded soldiers. With the help of the army, he easily ousted his uncle as well as his elder brothers. But once he was firmly established on the throne, and people from all parts had sent him allegiance and accepted him as their King, he forgot all his promises. This breach of faith, the first sign of his moral weakness after his accession to the throne, lowered him greatly in the eyes of the people.

Years went by without any important event, though mistrust and discontent were seething under the surface. Matters were brought to a head, when in 1924, H. M. King Amanullah Khan introduced some new laws, which the people would not accept. There was a general protest, but the King persisted in his views and would not rescind the unpopular laws. Thereupon, the people of the Southern Province, the most war-like tribes in the whole of Afghanistan, took up arms. The King could have easily saved the situation and an amicable settlement

could have been peacefully arrived at by calling a *Jirgah*, *i.e.* a national assembly. But he was unfortunately too sure of his own strength and misled by many of his inexperienced courtiers decided to punish the rebels and consequently declared war upon them. The present King of Afghanistan, then Marshal Mohammad Nadir Khan, Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan forces, the only man who had fully appraised the strength of the southern tribes and who realized the futility of a campaign against them, protested strongly against the intentions of the Government.

But the King had young blood in his veins. He did not like to be opposed in his actions particularly as some of his courtiers only helped him to have an exaggerated sense of his own importance. The war was, therefore, declared. It was an unwise and rash step and Marshal Nadir Khan resigned in protest. It was not long before the King realized his folly. He could not cope with the situation and was unable to suppress the rising. He lost a large number of his men and would have lost his throne as well but for a piece of sheer good luck which

saved him for the time being. When the insurgents reached Chahar-Asyah, about eight miles south of Kabul, they fell out among themselves, and the King's army, seizing the opportunity, fell suddenly upon them, and utterly routed them. But even this victory failed to put an end to the revolt. The King at last realized the absurdity of his action, repealed the offensive laws, and proclaimed a general amnesty. Hardly a month had passed, however, when fifty-two of the leaders, some of whom were men of great learning and influence, were arrested, court-martialled and shot. To commemorate this victory, the King erected a pillar and called it "The Pillar of Knowledge and Ignorance". The words on the pillar: "In memory of the campaign which was in reality a battle between Knowledge and Ignorance.....etc." stand there to this day. It was a piece of bad faith ill-becoming a King who boasted of being the head of a constitutional government and claimed to safeguard the rights of the people. The executions were in utter disregard of the promises of amnesty and pardon, and made

him justly unpopular, especially with the southern tribes; people began to feel that it was not safe to trust the King's word any longer.

Breach of faith on the part of the ruler was thus the first cause which fostered discontent and ultimately brought about his downfall. Later, when the revolution was in progress, and Bacha Saqao had delivered his attack, the King, seeing that his hopes of success were small, tried once more to win the public to his side. In the public garden of Kabul, he made a speech, promised once more to take back his unpopular laws and to grant his people a just constitution. But it was too late. The audience had lost their faith in him. There were some who openly reminded him of his past promises and of how they had been broken and refused to help him in any way.

Another cause which spread discontent among the people and hastened the revolution was the ruthless squandering of public money to the extent of nearly exhausting the treasury. In December 1927, King Amanullah Khan and his queen with a

few chosen courtiers went on an extensive tour in Europe and Western Asia. It was a very expensive affair, indeed, and could not be justified in view of the then conditions prevailing in the country and the exhausted condition of the treasury. It is estimated that this tour cost no less than £ 1,000,000. To the outside world this may not appear extraordinary, but to one who is familiar with the meagre resources of Afghanistan, so backward in commercial and industrial organization, the expenditure of this large sum cannot but be a matter of indignant surprise. Well-wishers of the country, who were alive to the needs of the situation, protested strongly against the proposed tour, but the strong-headed King, although professing great enthusiasm for national welfare, preferred his personal enjoyment to public considerations, and paid no heed. One can easily understand why the best brains of the country did not form part of the King's entourage on his European trip.

On his return from Europe, people thought that he would inaugurate an era of

Ex-king Amanullah Khan.

Sardar Inayatullah Khan.

reforms by removing the evils of corruption and maladministration, which had harassed the people for such a long time. They vainly hoped that he would increase the financial resources of the nation by improving agriculture, working up mines, in which the country was very rich, and introducing useful industries. But they were soon disillusioned. The so-called programme of "reforms", when it was finally launched, concerned itself mainly with the adoption of European dress and manners without taking into account the fact that the high standard of living, which was aimed at, had been achieved in Europe after decades of industrial and commercial development. The prescribed standards required money, but nothing was done to provide the nation with the means of obtaining it. The people, therefore, found it impossible to co-operate; and when at last force was resorted to, the situation went from bad to worse. A direct result of these reforms, which included the removal of *purdah* (veil), was increase in corruption and bribery. An average government employee whose monthly pay was not

more than Rs. 50 (about 30 shillings) was obliged to provide himself, his wife and children with European clothes. Not being able to obtain these by fair means, he was compelled to have recourse to foul ones. Bribery, theft and embezzlement became common among government employees to the misery of the people whose sufferings increased daily with the introduction of the "reforms". Strange orders were passed to herald the new era. Common artisans, bakers, cooks, fuel-sellers and drivers of camels and donkeys were obliged to wear European dress and disobedience was dealt with severely. The police was ordered to fine or else to chastise and even turn out of the public gardens and the city those who failed to comply with the new dress laws.

Instances were not wanting when a man or a woman, passing through the city in non-European dress, was prosecuted by the police several times and on each occasion had to pay a fine. In one case a man paid thirty such fines in the course of a single day. As a result of this high-handedness

many people left the city for other parts of the country and some even bade good-bye to their motherland.

Maladministration consequent upon these "reforms" was another important factor in bringing about the revolution. Corruption was rampant in all departments, civil as well as military. Most of the officials were inexperienced, incompetent and self-conceited and had secured their jobs by favouritism, bribery or nepotism. Higher officials, appeased by suitable bribes and presents, remained deaf to all complaints of oppression and connived at the misappropriation of public money. Government jobs were for sale and could be secured by the highest bidder irrespective of qualifications. The money paid and the post secured, the powers it conferred upon the incumbent were limitless and he was free to extract money from the people in any way he pleased. Posts of all sorts were sold openly and nobody was ashamed or afraid of receiving or offering bribes—the highest officials of the King and even of the Queen not excepted. The result of this maladministration was wide-spread

discontent among the people who were only too willing to throw off the unbearable yoke when opportunity presented itself. Their repeated remonstrances and complaints had no effect, because all the high posts were held by corrupt and incompetent favourites and flatterers of the King, whose sole concern was to ensure their own position by humouring him, and pampering to his fanciful ideas. Indeed, during the whole reign of King Amanullah Khan not a single instance is known of a high official having been tried or punished for any public offence, although it is a well-known fact that many of them were secretly in league with notorious robbers and thieves and shared their plunder. Officials who offered honest advice, although they had long and honourable service to their credit, were obliged to resign which increased the scope for the malpractices of worthless and greedy courtiers who were left in power.

Afghanistan is, on the whole, an agricultural country and the principal source of government revenue is the land tax. The prosperity of the country, therefore, depends to a large extent on the welfare of the

peasantry. Increased taxation necessitated by the European tour and other expensive schemes meant increased hardship for this class, which constitutes the major part of the population and which gained nothing by the enhanced revenues. In consequence, the peasants were in a sad plight. Straved, overworked, ill-clothed, they became full of hatred towards their oppressors till only a spark was needed to cause an explosion.

The condition of the army was worse still. They were ill-kept and ill-fed. Under the laws of conscription every Afghan was required to serve the army for two years. But in practice the rule applied to the poor only; the rich could easily bribe the officials and stay at home. The sanitary arrangements of the cantonments were very bad. The soldiers were paid only Rs. 4 a month, with which to maintain themselves, and in most cases their families as well. Some of these wretched people were obliged to get leave from their officers and to engage in some private work with which to eke out their meagre allowance. Others deserted the army but since their salaries continued to be drawn

and went into the pockets of officers, nobody cared to bring the offenders to book. Thus when the time came for active service, not even one-tenth of the enrolled strength could be mustered; nor was this small percentage quite willing to fight on the side of its oppressors.

The fact that so many cases of desertion escaped detection shows that the Intelligence Department, if it existed, was no more than a name. Even when Bacha Saqao and his men were only a few miles from Kabul, the King lay secure in the *Arg* (royal palace) fully assured that there was absolutely no disturbance in the country.

In the Grand Assembly of 1928 held at Paghman when the King put forth his new programme, some of its clauses met with opposition. The King, however, solemnly promised to abide by the decision of the august body and delete the disapproved items. But within a month the promise was broken and members of the assembly, greatly annoyed, left the capital in disgust. No sooner had they reached their homes than signs of discontent and unrest began to show all over

the country. There were small risings in several quarters, and the King being either misinformed, or proud of his power and influence, paid no heed to them, till the disturbances took the form of a revolution. The King was not strong enough to meet the crisis. He could not realize the strength of the forces arrayed against him, nor could he devise means to cope with them successfully. On the other hand, contrary to all Afghan traditions, he shirked the issue, and by his lack of courage lost all chances of winning support and possibly, success. He abdicated in favour of his elder brother, Sardar Inayatullah Khan, and secretly ran away to Kandahar, leaving the nation an easy prey to the brigands of the north.

Lastly, the poor estimate in which he held the religious feelings of his subjects was an important factor in bringing about his downfall and precipitating the catastrophe. Rumours were rife that the King had renounced Islam. No efforts were made to contradict such false rumours. On the other hand, the careless ways of the King, his attempt to ride rough shod over centuries-old traditions,

and his ridicule of the religious minded, lent support to public suspicion. Nor did the facts that the water-supply of some mosques was cut off, their electric light was disconnected, and some religious places were allowed to fall into a state of dilapidation, help to allay the rumours. Some stupid officials publicly declared that Qoranic laws had become obsolete and were no longer suited to modern conditions. Such acts helped to stir the smouldering fire of public indignation into a general conflagration until it assumed the dreadful form of a religious war, not so much a rebellion against a king, as a *Jehad* against an infidel.

CHAPTER II

The Revolution

The wide-spread discontent, which had found vent for a time in whispers and quiet remonstrances, broke out at last into open rebellion in one of the remotest parts of the country. The Shinwaris, a strong and war-like tribe, well-armed and sufficiently disciplined, who live on the eastern border of Afghanistan near the mouth of the Khyber Pass, were the first to rise, in order, as they professed, to end the unpopular regime of King Amanullah Khan. They began by attacking the Government military posts of Achin and Kai on November 14, 1928. The soldiers who had many grievances were demoralized and offered but feeble resistance. Their officers, who were unaware of the wide-spread ill-feeling, were taken by surprise, and were soon overpowered. The soldiers were disarmed, the officers imprisoned, and large quantities of ammunition, which stood them in good stead, fell into the hands of the rebels. Then they

plundered the Government offices and set the buildings on fire. Other discontented tribes emboldened by their success joined hands with them and their numbers swelled. More outbreaks occurred in other quarters. Members of the Grand Assembly and men of religion were not slow to take advantage of the situation to avenge the indignities they had suffered at the hands of the King and his corrupt courtiers. Exaggerated stories of the King's extravagance, his self-willedness and his trespasses against the laws of Islam were circulated all around. The result was that within a very short time, King Amanullah Khan lost all the military posts of the Eastern Province. Torkham and Dakka, the Afghan custom posts near the Khyber Pass, were plundered and the soldiers there disarmed. Not satisfied with this and realizing the weakness of local officers and the ignorance of the Central Government, the rebels advanced boldly upon Jalalabad, which they easily besieged. After plundering the Government offices outside the city walls and burning down most of them, they encompassed the

city and the cantonment and cut the telephone and telegraph lines, so that the Central Government could communicate with the city only by means of aeroplanes. The Peshawar-Kabul Road was blocked and infested with robbers. It was only then that Amanullah Khan realized the dangerous character of the revolt. But he committed another blunder, this time of a very serious nature. Instead of putting a strong force in the field under experienced commanders, he was content with sending small detachments under inexperienced courtiers, who had never seen a field of battle before and were utterly ignorant of military tactics. One of these favourites, Mahmud Khan Yawar, was sent to the relief of the Jalalabad garrison. It was his first experience of a soldier's life. He marched as far as Nimla, twenty miles west of Jalalabad, and halted. Numerous messages came from Jalalabad, asking him to march immediately to their help, but he did not stir ; such was the lack of co-operation between the various officers of Amanullah Khan. The rebels, on the other hand, although of different tribes, were better organized, had superior discipline and their

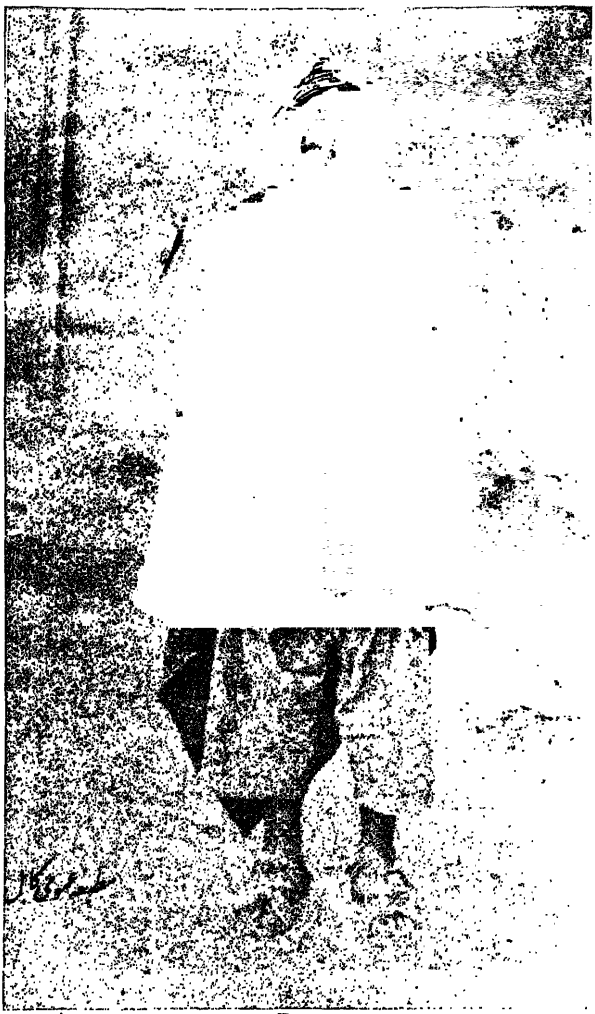
sources of information were more numerous and reliable. They knew when and where to strike and were well aware of the military incapacity of Mahmud Khan. A handful of Khogianis surrounded him and after a brief struggle took him prisoner. His soldiers were disarmed and sent away. Most of them had been recruited from the Northern Province, the home of Bacha. When they returned to their homes, they related exaggerated tales of the weakness of the King's army and the strength of the rebels.

The news of the fall of Nimla and the capture of Mahmud Khan was a great shock to the besieged garrison at Jalalabad. The army was disheartened and a spirit of desertion began to spread both among the royal troops and the levies. The deserters, instead of seeking safety in flight or concealment, ran away with their rifles and either joined the rebels or infested the highways. The levies followed suit, most of them joining the Shinwaris. Sher Ahmad Khan, the commander of the Jalalabad garrison, finding himself entirely cut off from the Central Government, tried his best to

come to reasonable terms with the rebels, by inviting them to a *Jirgah.* Mohammad Alam Khan, the Shinwari leader, was approached and consented to a parley. Truce having been made, there was a lull in the fighting and at one time it seemed probable that the trouble would soon be over, and that Sher Ahmad Khan by his diplomacy and lavish promises of rewards would succeed in winning over the tribes and settling the matter amicably. Unfortunately, the recent behaviour of the King and his perfidious courtiers had produced such strong resentment among the tribesmen that Sher Ahmad Khan, in spite of his very sincere efforts, failed to arrive at a suitable settlement. The first demand of the rebels was that the King should abdicate immediately, for they said they could no longer tolerate his misrule and his treachery. Their second demand was the permanent expulsion of Tarzi's family from Afghanistan, who in their opinion, were the real origin of the new laws and the so-called reforms. Sher Ahmad Khan was obviously not in a position to agree to these demands and informed the King of his failure. It was then decided to

send Ali Ahmad Jan, the Governor of Kabul, to cope with this critical situation. It was generally believed that as he had great influence in that part of the country he would be able to tide over the difficulty. Affairs in the east were at this pass when a new and more serious rising broke out in the Northern Province, a few miles to the north of Kabul. This rising developed very quickly and ultimately proved the death-knell of Amanullah Khan's regime.

Bacha Saqao.—Habibullah, better known by his nickname of Bacha Saqao, for he was the son of a water-carrier, was a native of Kalakan, a village situated at a distance of some twenty miles from the capital. He had had his training as a soldier in an Afghan regiment called Qita-i-Namuna, but his mischievous proclivities soon obliged him to seek refuge in exile. He went away to Peshawar and thence to Parachinar. Even there he could not lead a peaceful life. He was several times fined and imprisoned. Physically he was a stout square-built man, of exceptional strength and courage, which was so well-known that in a case of theft, when a large iron safe was



Bachae saqao.

The Bacha and his courtiers.

stolen near Parachinar, he was easily traced as the thief, because it was thought that none other than Bacha could have removed the safe. When this man learnt of the general discontent of the people against the Government, he thought the opportunity was too good to be lost. Accordingly, he went back to his village and gathered a number of notorious bandits around him. Taking advantage of the ignorance and the spirit of treachery prevailing among Government officials, he infested the roads, plundered caravans and robbed wealthy merchants, some of whom he took away with himself to the hills and held to ransom. Government officials were indifferent spectators of the drama; some of them had a share in the plunder; others, from want of experience, were incapable of realizing the danger of the situation or dealing with it in a satisfactory manner. The lip-loyal courtiers deceived the King even at this juncture. They kept him in ignorance of the true state of affairs and minimized the danger. Some of them were secretly in league with Bacha and helped him with arms and money. They advised the King to send only small detachments of troops which were

taken by surprise and easily overpowered. These defeats clearly demonstrated the weakness of the army and the treachery at the court, and were of great encouragement to Bacha and his partisans. Their numbers increased daily. Robbers from all parts of the country gathered around him. Government offices and treasuries were plundered in broad daylight. Military posts were stormed and captured ; the officers were put to the sword, and the soldiers either enlisted in his infamous band or were disarmed. This gave the men of religion the opportunity they had been seeking for long, of avenging themselves on the King, who had so long insulted their religion, trampled upon their susceptibilities, and had refused to listen to their grievances. In Bacha they found a man whom they could use for their own purposes. They declared him to be a Ghazi, a defender of the faith, and went from place to place inciting the people to rally round his standard. A large number of people now gathered round him, some to have a share in the loot, others to get rid of an unsympathetic Government under which they had been groaning for a long time. The secret help of

those courtiers who had turned traitors, and lack of experience and sheer incapacity on the part of others went a long way to strengthen Bacha's position. Raids now gave way to pitched battles in which the royal forces met with crushing defeats. Thenceforward Bacha treated the prisoners of war with kindness.

The condition of the city of Kabul at this time may well be imagined. The news of the fall of Nimla, blockade of the trade routes and repeated reverses of royal troops in the north greatly upset the people. Prices of food-stuffs and other necessities of life were daily rising and added greatly to the miseries of the inhabitants. Exaggerated stories were told of the strength of the rebels and of their victories. Like vultures gathering over a carcase, people came from all parts of the country to secure their share of the plunder; and the presence of these undesirable elements was a source of constant terror to the citizens.

Finding that he could not crush the insurrection, the King thought of playing off one enemy against another. He opened negotiations for peace with Bacha and his adherents, and promised them handsome

rewards and high posts. Bacha was offered a Brigadier-Generalship and was asked to proceed with men of his own selection to Jalalabad to fight against the Shinwaris. The trick was too apparent and could not deceive Bacha who interpreted it correctly as an admission of weakness. It was a gross blunder and Bacha utilized it to his fullest advantage. Now that he had the authority of a royal warrant at his back and was a full-fledged Brigadier, he organized a large army and equipped it at government expense. Having thus strengthened his hands, he at once changed his policy, declared himself King and proceeded to attack Kabul. Some are of opinion that King Amanullah Khan intended to break his promise and take Bacha prisoner, but the latter having learnt of the King's true intentions by an uncommon act of cleverness adopted the course indicated above. The story goes that after concluding the agreement with Amanullah Khan and with a view to testing the latter's sincerity, he phoned to Amanullah Khan as from Ahmad Ali, Rais Tanzimia, the organizing commander of the Northern Province, and asked for the King's instructions concerning Bacha and his men,

who, he said, were in his grip. Amanullah Khan in reply ordered him to take all of them prisoners and send them to the capital under a strong escort. How far this story is true, it is not possible to say at the present moment, but this much is certain that soon after the treaty had been concluded, Bacha enrolled a large number of men in his troops and declared himself King. He ordered Sayed Hussain, one of his colleagues, to proceed towards Jabl-us-Siraj, a strong military station at the foot of the Hindu Kush, about fifty miles to the north of Kabul, while he himself marched on the capital.

CHAPTER III

Bacha Advances

After the truce with Bacha Saqao had been made and its terms published in local newspapers and official pamphlets, the civil population of Kabul breathed freely for a while and every one thought that the city was now safe. Although dismal news from the eastern front found their way into the city now and then, and disturbed the peace of the people in no small measure, the situation was generally regarded as being within control. Ali Ahmad Jan, an experienced general, was already in the Eastern Province, and Bacha with his band of robbers would soon be on his way to assist him. With the northern question thus settled, it was hoped and with reason that the rebels in the east would be overawed and speedy settlement would follow. Besides, the people thought that even if Ali Ahmad Jan failed in his negotiations with the rebels, the capital was not in any imminent danger. The home of the rebels was a long way off, Kabul being in the grip of a severe winter and the

Shinwaris and other Eastern tribes, accustomed as they were to a milder climate, would not dare to make an advance upon the capital.

But the lull broke in a few days. On December 13, at about 4 in the evening, the citizens of Kabul were suddenly alarmed to hear sounds of rapid firing not far from the city. People were seen running about in different directions whispering that Bacha had come. Shops were closed at once and the terror-stricken citizens shut themselves up in their houses. None could say what the invasion meant. Bacha had entered into a solemn agreement; he and his adherents had been granted general amnesty for their past behaviour; they were no longer robbers and cut-throats, but loyal subjects of the King and their leader was a Brigadier-General of the royal army. How could they make an attack on the city after all that? It must be some other robber band who, aware of the impotency of the Central Government, wanted to have a share in the booty and, like Saqao, would be paid handsomely. But all conjectures were set at rest when it became definitely known that Saqao and his men had declared a *Jehad* against the King, and

assisted by the nobles and Mullahs of the Northern Province, were now on their way to Kabul, having already reached Shehr Ara, where the Habibia College was then housed, about a mile from the Arg.

Bacha, after declaring himself Amir and Defender of Islam, divided his army into two parts. One of them was sent to the north under the command of Sayed Hussain to capture the fort of Jabl-us-Siraj, as has been mentioned above, while the other about three hundred strong, under his personal command marched straight on Kabul. His plan was to smuggle his forces into the Arg in the guise of royal levies and take the King by surprise. On the way, at Serai Khoja, he easily disarmed the government troops, some of whom were won over to his side by tact and promises of future advancement. He met with no further opposition and after crossing the Khairkhana Pass made a dash for Kabul.

This bold step on his part with only a handful of men at his side shows clearly that he was fully acquainted with the weakness and the apathy of the Central Government, and that some of the courtiers were secretly in league with him and supplied

him with all the necessary intelligence. The attack on the capital and on the person of the King and the capture of the public treasury in broad daylight had been thought out with such care that nothing but chance could have thwarted Bacha's plans. He reached Bagh-i-Bala, a fortified military hospital about three miles from Kabul, without meeting any resistance. He took possession of the place without difficulty and large supplies of ammunition fell into his hands, as the military magazine was close-by. It was from there that the War Ministry received a telephone message for the first time, conveying the horrible news of Bacha's arrival. One can easily guess the consternation and perplexity of the negligent officers on learning that the enemy was already at the door, while they were wholly unprepared to meet him. Abdul Aziz Khan, the War Minister, was at his wits' end. It was with great difficulty that he could arrange to send a few soldiers to check the enemy's advance and save the Arg from immediate capture. Distressing news went round the city. Bacha had by this time reached Shehr Ara. While he was passing by the Military School

a band of eighteen military students opened fire on the insurgents and kept them engaged for half an hour. They were, however, easily overpowered and disarmed; their number was small and they had run short of ammunition. But their timely resistance saved the government from immediate collapse. But for their gallantry and opportune action, the King would have lost both his kingdom and his life.

Rapid firing on both sides at last roused the King in his palace, and opened his eyes to the seriousness of the situation. Some eighty men of the Royal Guards came out and made a bold stand against the rebels. By their courage and skill, they beat the enemy back after a bloody fight lasting for about two hours. Bacha and his men were compelled to retreat and take shelter in the Habibia College and the adjacent village of Kalola Pushtah. The tower of the Habibia College occupies a commanding position and the Royal Guards could not immediately follow up their advantage. But an hour later, a few well-aimed cannon shots from the Arg compelled Bacha to evacuate the tower and retire. He left the place

under cover of the night and joined his men in Kalola Pushtah, whence they retired to Bagh-i-Bala. Nobody in the city slept that night. The foreigners had already sought shelter in their respective legations.

Day dawned and fighting was resumed. Offices, schools, colleges and shops remained closed. There was no traffic and trade was at a standstill. Prices shot up, adding greatly to the distress of the poor. The danger to the city was increasing hourly. The gates of the Arg were closed, stores of provisions and other necessities were taken in and a sort of a siege commenced. There was no strong army to put into the field ; the Royal Guards were not sufficient even for the defence of the Arg and none of them could be spared for an action with Bacha. The other soldiers had no experience of active warfare and were little inclined to fight for those whom they looked upon as their oppressors.

Even when matters had proceeded so far, the traitorous courtiers remained true to their creed. They misinformed the King as to the strength of the invaders and continued to soothe him with their flattery, telling him that there was really nothing to be anxious

about. The few misguided rebels who had been foolish enough to attack the city, they said, would soon have cause to regret their folly. But the King had by now fully realized the unwisdom of his past actions and was sorry for having dismissed those straightforward and trustworthy officers who alone could have been relied upon in his hour of need. He sent messages of distress to all parts of the country, calling for levies. People in large numbers hurried to the capital in the hope of receiving ample rewards in case of success and a goodly share of plunder in case of defeat and collapse of the Government. The city was choked with these unwelcome guests from different clans, and the citizens were greatly harassed.

The royal magazines were thrown open; arms and ammunition were freely distributed among the new-comers and those who offered their services. Everybody who could approach the government officers was favoured with a rifle and a few rounds of cartridges. When the news of this lavish and indiscriminate distribution of arms and ammunition spread far and wide, large numbers of people flocked to the city. Taking advantage of this

occasion, some of Bacha's sympathizers appeared in disguise and were supplied with ammunition and arms from the royal magazines.

Most of the new-comers returned home with their newly-acquired rifles, others infested the roads ; some roamed about in the city in the hope of finding an opportunity to loot some wealthy merchants, while not a few joined hands with the rebels. Ghaus-ud-Din, chief of the Ahmadzais, a warlike Ghilzai tribe of the Southern Province, received a large number of rifles on promise of faithful service, but deserted the royal camp soon after and went back to his village. In the city there was a universal feeling of hatred towards the King and his government, which was responsible for this unrest and internecine warfare. The King was well aware of the general hatred and dared not come out of his castle or show himself in public. The fighting went on for some days without easing the situation. The rebels had taken up their position in Bagh-i-Bala, in Nau Burjah, a strong mud fortress of nine towers, next door to the British Legation and at Kafir Koh, a high hill of great strategical importance. The

royal forces and the levies formed a semi-circle stretching from Kafir Koh to the Wazirabad plain near the aerodrome. A careful observer could easily see that Bacha's men fought with spirit and enthusiasm; they were better disciplined and better equipped. On the other hand, there was no co-operation between the royal forces and the levies and cases are known of some soldiers having been shot down by the latter. The Government was so incompetent that even at a time of such imminent peril, it could not provide the men with sufficient food and ammunition; some of them had to quit their posts and come back to the city to fetch their own provisions. Most of the officers went to the front at 9 or 10 in the morning and would come back at 4 in the evening as if they were supervising a sham fight in manœuvres.

Good luck, too, seemed to have deserted the King.

Aeroplanes caught fire by chance, burning the pilots to death, armoured cars overturned or went out of order right in the field of battle. Sayed Hussain had by this time captured Jabl-us-Siraj and the hydro-

electric power house which supplied electricity to the capital. He cut the line, so that the capital was deprived of its electric light, which added greatly to the distress of the people and made the prospect very gloomy. British aeroplanes flew over at this time of confusion and undertook to remove to Peshawar, at first the ladies and children and later the men of foreign nationalities.

On the fourth day a splinter of shell struck Bacha in the back and injured his backbone, making a deep cut though not a serious one. He fell down from his horse, and this caused a temporary alarm among his men. But he soon came round and controlled the situation as before and the fighting continued. The intensity of feeling against Amanullah Khan's Government can be gauged from the fact that when the news of Bacha's fall from his horse reached Kabul, the citizens, the majority of whom now looked upon him as their hero and the defender of their cause, prayed for his health and speedy recovery.

Amanullah Khan took courage from this accident and did his best to win the public over to his side. After having

remained shut in for four days, he came out of the Arg and proceeded to the public gardens on foot. There he delivered a harangue before a large gathering in which he promised them all they wanted, including the repeal of the odious laws he had promulgated, and made an appeal for their co-operation. But it was too late. The situation had gone out of control, and the people would not listen to him any more. Some went so far as to tell him to his face that they could no longer trust his word. Pamphlets promising the rescission of the unpopular laws and the grant of a just constitution proved equally ineffective. On the contrary, they revealed the hollowness of the government and its utter inability to cope with the situation.

In spite of his injury, Bacha did not quit his place and there was no change in the front. On the 24th of December after a sustained battle of twelve days, a handful of soldiers assisted by some tribesmen, who had been offered some thousand rupees for this service, made a dash for Kafir Koh. They met with a stout opposition and much blood was shed, but at last they succeeded in

driving out the rebels and managed to occupy the hill. Having lost that commanding position, Bacha thought he could not keep his own, and under cover of night escaped with his men to join Sayed Hussain, who was by now absolute master of the Northern Province.

Coup D'etat.—The royal army was glad to find the field deserted next morning. No one suggested or thought of pursuing the enemy and finally disposing of them. They let slip the opportunity and Bacha was allowed sufficient time to prepare himself for a second attack on Kabul. The government realized its folly a week later. Aeroplanes were sent to bomb hostile villages and heavy Italian guns commenced the bombardment of the Northern Province from the aerodrome but with little success. In spite of disquieting reports, the King yet hoped to hold his own, till on a foggy night, Hamid Ullah, Bacha's younger brother, effected a breach in the royal lines and forced a general retreat. When intelligence was brought to Amanullah Khan of this unhappy event, he realized that his days were

over. He called a hurried council and abdicated in favour of his elder brother, Inayat Ullah Khan. The words he used on that occasion are memorable: "The welfare of the country" he said, "demands that I should withdraw my hands from public affairs, for all the bloodshed and risings in the country are due to a general hatred of me." Next morning, accompanied by a few favourites he escaped to Kandahar by car, taking with him whatever of gold and precious stones still remained in the public treasury, the bulk having been already conveyed to Kandahar by the aeroplanes that carried the Queen and other ladies of the royal family.

The unfortunate Inayat Ullah Khan, the real heir to his father's throne, whom Amanullah Khan had deprived of his lawful right, was not to enjoy his kingship for long. At about 2 the news of his brother's abdication was made public and by 4 in the evening he found himself nearly besieged by Bacha's forces. A mission of some influential men, including Sardar Mohammad Usman Khan and Hazrat Mohd. Sadiq Khan, a younger brother of the well-

known Hazrat-i-Shorbazar, was immediately despatched to inform Bacha of the change in the Government. But Bacha flushed with victory, did not care to surrender the fruits of his triumph. He saw that he was on the eve of realizing what he could not have thought of in his wildest dreams. Inayat Ullah Khan was asked to vacate the Arg, or else to prepare for battle. Negotiations went on for three days, and on the fourth day Inayat Ullah Khan signed an agreement with Bacha acknowledging the latter's kingship and promising to vacate the Arg, provided he was allowed to fly to India in a British plane. Thus, after a reign of only three days and a half, Inayat Ullah Khan, with all the members of his family left for Peshawar in British aeroplanes at about 2 P.M., on January 27, 1928. After a few days' rest at Dean's Hotel, he proceeded to Kandahar to rejoin his brother.

CHAPTER IV

The Reign of Terror

A few minutes after Inayatullah Khan left the capital, Bacha's hordes took possession of the Arg and the Public Treasury. The nobles and the remaining members of the royal family were ordered to vacate at once. At 5 in the evening Bacha himself with a number of his chosen friends entered the royal palace with due ceremony and declared himself the Amir of Afghanistan. The terrified citizens were asked to send in their written allegiance at once. Those who ignored this order were regarded as enemies and were severely dealt with.

The citizens, although they had a few days ago looked upon Bacha as the national hero, were in no way ready to accept a low born notorious character as their king. Their sympathies with him were only due to their extreme hatred for King Amanullah Khan and his regime. Having got rid of him they wanted to see on the throne of Kabul a wise and just king under whose rule and guidance they should be able to rebuild

their battered position and to re-organize their scattered resources. One can easily guess their extreme disappointment when they heard the Saqaoists shouting in the streets of Kabul: "Long Live Amir Habibullah, the Servant of Islam."

The Bacha was not slow in forming his Cabinet, which consisted of the following members :—

Hamidullah, his younger brother—Moin-us-Saltanah, Assistant to the Amir.

Sayed Hussain—Naib-us-Saltanah, Minister of War.

Sher Jan—Chamberlain. He was by far the ablest and cleverest of Bacha's partisans, and it was chiefly due to his efforts and those of his brothers, Ata-ul-Haq and Mohammad Siddiq, that the reign of terror lasted for so many months.

Ata-ul-Haq—The Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Abdul Ghafoor—Home Minister.

Malik Mohsin—The Governor of Kabul.

Mirza Mujtaba Khan—The Officiating Minister of Finance.

Of these members of the Cabinet, four,

including the Bacha himself, were illiterate and had no experience of administration whatsoever. But they were invariably assisted by Sher Jan, the Chamberlain. But for the help of this man, the Bacha's regime would have been a very brief one indeed.

During the period of nine months that this reign lasted unspeakable atrocities and appalling cruelties were daily perpetrated, the poor citizens of the capital providing the chief victims. The Arg was the seat of this stern and relentless despotism, which trampled on every principle of law, justice and humanity, and which derived its right and power not from God or the people but from the sword.

Schools and colleges and all the useful institutions were closed. Libraries, laboratories and the royal museum were sacked and rare books and articles of value were either destroyed, burnt or sold at ridiculous prices. For one *Kiran* (about 3 pence) down, one could buy as many books as he could carry on one's shoulders. No man of birth, accomplishment or knowledge was suffered near the person of this tyrant. Of the noblemen and the scholars those who could find a

chance left the capital and took shelter in the remotest parts of the country, out of the reach of the Bacha and his colleagues. Others who could not afford to leave their families imprisoned themselves within the four walls of their houses. But even this step of voluntary confinement was of no avail to them ; they could not escape the wrath of the tyrant or his officers. They were hunted out and dragged through the bazaars in the most ignominious manner and large sums of money were extorted from them by torture. In some cases the demand was so exorbitant that the victim finding no other choice had to pay with his life. Bands of these marauders prowling about the city would catch hold of passers-by and make them pay large sums of money or on their refusal enter their houses and take whatever they could lay their hands upon. Theoretically the Bacha was the head of the state, but in practice every one of his officers had unlimited power and was not responsible to anybody or answerable under any code of law. Even an ordinary soldier would call himself *mustaqil* (*i.e.* independent) and could by his own authority shoot any one who dared to incur his displeasure. But of these

merciless marauders no one stands out so prominent in point of cruelty as Malik Mohsin, the Governor of Kabul. This old rogue (he was seventy years of age) plumed himself on the fact that the Bacha himself had once been in his service as a menial, for Malik Mohsin was a big landlord in the village of Bacha's birth. Those who were summoned by him usually took a last farewell of their family, as they had no hopes of returning alive. He had a separate prison of his own where daily a large number of people were tortured under his cruel orders.

Wealthy traders were ordered to supply the Government with huge sums of money, or in default undergo severe physical tortures. Prices were abnormally high, trade was almost at a standstill and nearly all the citizens were thrown out of employment. Only those who offered themselves for active service could get employment, for the Bacha had the provinces yet to subdue. But even the higher posts were reserved for robbers and notorious adventurers, and an honest man hardly ever rose above the ranks.

Wealthy people, important public servants and men of influence were the chief

victims, for they created suspicion and fear in the mind of this illiterate tyrant. Distinction of any kind called for punishment. Without a witness, without even a show of trial or an opportunity to defend, a large number of people fell victim to the insatiable wrath of this blood-thirsty monarch and his cruel followers. Suspicion was considered tantamount to proof and a trial invariably led to conviction. No one could dare to argue and no time was allowed for such purposes.

As the days passed and reports of victory poured in from everywhere, the Bacha feeling firm and secure ruled with increasing cruelty and tyranny. After those orgies of bloodshed, he became quite indifferent to murder and totally incapable of pity or remorse. Confiscation of property, exile or simple death were deemed uncommon instances of his leniency. Most of the unfortunate victims were either blown up from the cannon's mouth or shot down; others were either beaten, bastinadoed, impaled, bayonetted or starved to death. Sprinkling of boiling oil over the body or putting the victims into large iron cages or cutting off their hands

and even all the joints of their bodies one by one were ordinary daily occurrences. His chief victims were the officials of King Amanullah Khan and wealthy merchants or influential and learned men. The execution of innocent people was secretly bewailed by friends and families. No one could dare to express his sympathies openly with the victims or their relatives. Of these innocent victims of tyranny none were more lamented than Sardar Mohammad Usman Khan, a man of great learning and the Principal of the Arabic College and Sardar Hayatullah Khan and Abdul Majid Jan, two brothers of the ex-King. All three were secretly done away with and their bodies thrown into a ditch. After the reign of Bacha Saqao was ended, the corpses were dug out and buried in the royal cemetery in Bostan Serai.

By such extortions of money and forfeitures of the estates and properties of the nobles and the wealthy merchants, the Bacha was able to accumulate enough wealth to meet the heavy cost of his large standing army and to win some of the powerful tribal chiefs over to his side.

Realizing that with the mailed fist alone

could he maintain his position, the usurper gradually collected a powerful body of soldiers, chiefly recruited from the Northern Province. It was in constant readiness to protect his person, to impress the poor people over whom he ruled, to crush any rebellion at its first signs, and even to carry out his plan of the conquest of the whole of Afghanistan. He showed particular favour to these troops by paying double and treble salaries and by granting them special privileges.

Though every means of injustice and extortion had been adopted in order to fill the treasury, the extravagance of his colleagues proved such a heavy drain that the Bacha was obliged to devise yet newer methods of extracting money. He issued paper currency which nobody would accept; and which the poor shopkeepers were made to honour at the point of the bayonet.

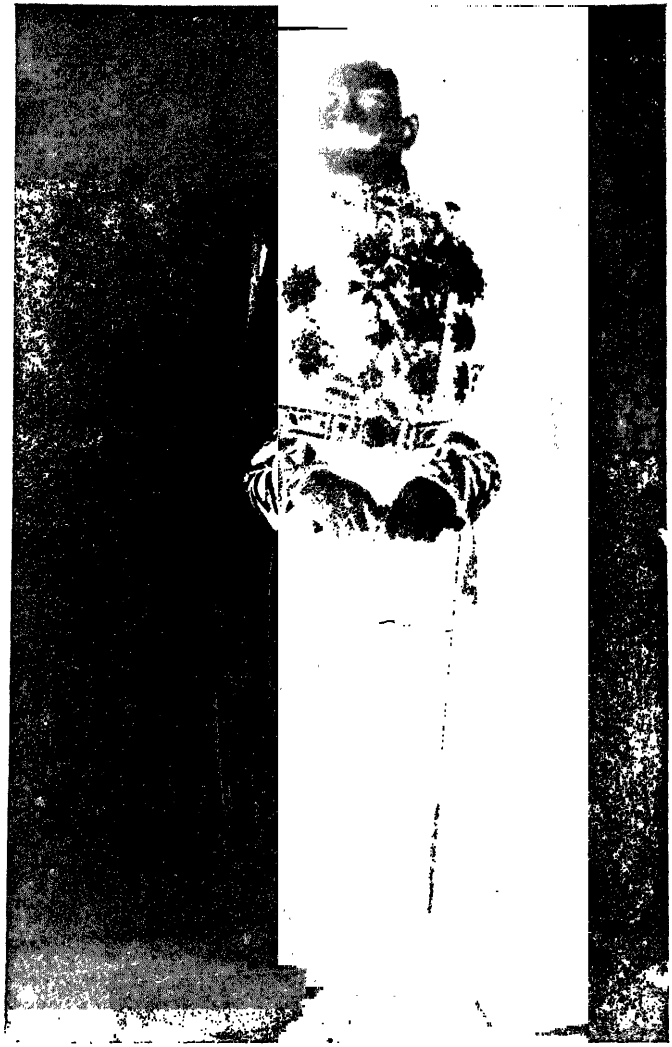
The foul mind of the tyrant was open to every suspicion against those who were most distinguished either by birth or merit. He suspected the students most and regarded them as his secret enemies. Whenever he was frightened at the false news of treason

on the part of a student, his cruelty knew no bounds. In one instance a conspiracy against his person was either discovered, imagined or framed. A student, Habibullah Khan by name, was pointed out as the principal author of it. Another, Abdul Rasul Khan, was accused of being his accomplice. Both of them, together with Qari Dost Mohammad, were dragged through the bazaars, taken to the aerodrome and shot.

None could venture to raise his voice against these atrocities. Meetings and large gatherings were strictly prohibited and even those who were found whispering were punished. Thousands of people were undergoing severe punishments in the dungeons and praying for death to end their sufferings. Others had no peace of mind and were in constant dread of being robbed or put to death. Such was the deplorable condition of the unfortunate inhabitants of this land when the victorious army of Marshal Nadir Khan under the leadership of his younger brother, Sardar Shah Wali Khan, entered the capital, bombarded the Arg and after a gallant attack captured it; thus bringing to an end the cruel regime of the Bacha

and the miseries of the people. A full account of this victorious march is given in a later chapter.

The Bachcha and his brother.



The Late Wali Ali Ahmad Jan.

CHAPTER V

Ali Ahmad Jan in the East

The narrative of the rising in the east after the fall of Nimla is in a great degree the story of the adventures of Wali Ali Ahmad Jan; so great was the part he played in that act of the drama. Ali Ahmad Jan, it will be remembered, was sent out by King Amanullah Khan to use his influence with the eastern tribes and thus quell the rising. This old general had set for himself very lofty ideals even in the early days of Amanullah Khan's reign. Slowly and steadily, he had won great influence in the Eastern Province and it was not surprising that during his stay at Jalalabad, he succeeded in persuading some of the powerful tribes to suspend hostilities and meet in a *Jirgah*. But Ali Ahmad Jan was not doing his best in this matter. In his heart of hearts, he disliked Amanullah's rule, and he had many personal grievances against the King, who had never treated him well or kindly, although he was the King's cousin and brother-in-law. Several

16502

times was he disgraced and insulted, both in private and in public. On one occasion, the King had made up his mind to put an end to Ali Ahmad Jan's life, when he was saved by the timely intercession on his behalf of the King's mother, who was Ali Ahmad Jan's aunt. By dint of his shrewdness and tact he had won the respect of the eastern tribes, especially the Khogianis; but some of his personal weaknesses were his undoing and led to his ultimate failure.

When he came to learn that King Amanullah had abdicated and Bacha had succeeded in taking the Arg and had declared himself King, his ambition was roused and believing himself in every way superior to the Bacha, he hailed the opportunity as a gift of the gods and proclaimed himself King at Jalalabad. Instead of the *Jirgah*, a great meeting was held, to which he invited influential tribal leaders and after explaining to them the absurdity of having an ignoramus as the head of the Central Government, offered himself as a fit person for that exalted position. Some of the leaders were won over to his side by lavish

promises of rewards, and some were forced to sign bond of allegiance, yet there were men like Sayed Ahmad Khan and Mohammad Gul Khan, the present Home Minister, who were bold enough to refuse homage and to argue that this was not the time for self-approval but for action and that the first duty of every Afghan at this juncture was to fight the Bacha, the common enemy of the nation, and to bring about his downfall. When this was accomplished it would then be time to invite representatives from all parts of the country to a Grand Assembly and choose their king. They pointed out that any other course would perpetuate civil war and ultimately ruin the whole nation. But Ali Ahmad Jan, who was too ambitious to listen to reason or friendly advice, punished and otherwise disgraced the dissenters, and thus silenced his opponents.

Having won over in this way a large number of men to his side, his next objective was Kabul; for he knew that the fall of Kabul meant easy success in other parts of the country. But he wasted a good deal of time in getting under way,

while the interval was used by Bacha in gathering a large number of men and equipping and organizing them under the instruction of Mahmud Sami, an experienced general and military teacher.

Ali Ahmad Jan had very soon to taste the fruits of his procrastination. His forces at Jagdilak had been chiefly recruited from the Northern Province, and naturally their sympathies were with Bacha, and when they learnt of the latter's success in taking Kabul, they made up their minds to desert Ali Ahmad Jan. The news of their resolve came to Ali Ahmad Jan as a great shock. Leaving Abdul Wakil Khan as his regent at Jalalabad, he hastily marched to Jagdilak. But even there he mostly occupied himself in compelling people to accept him as their King, while all this time Bacha was strengthening himself and everyday a large number of men were recruited and straightway put under training by him. Bacha recognized in Ali Ahmad Jan a most formidable rival. No doubt Amanullah Khan had again declared himself King at Kandahar, but that gave Bacha no cause for anxiety. He knew that Amanullah Khan was generally

hated by his people and had no chance of winning back his throne. But Ali Ahmad Jan was an experienced general and had a regular force at his back with a large quantity of arms and ammunition, and commanded great influence in the east. Bacha sent a mission to Ali Ahmad Jan asking him to swear allegiance forthwith. The mission met Ali Ahmad Jan at Jagdilak, where he was busy with his preparations for the attack on Kabul. Instead of sending the mission back with a reply he detained it for sometime, lest they should carry information to the Bacha regarding the real strength of his army. But these precautions proved of no avail. His army, recruited as it was from different tribes, was of too heterogeneous a character including men from the north who could not make up their mind to fight against the Bacha; as soon as an opportunity offered itself were only too willing to desert his camp to join the Saqaoists.

Thus he committed a serious mistake when he sent a detachment of troops towards the Caves of Mullah Omar at a distance of some six miles from But-Khak, the Bacha's

outpost towards the east. Most of the men in the vanguard were from the north and when they found themselves face to face with the Saqaoists neither side would fire, and ultimately Ali Ahmad Jan's men went over to Bacha's side taking with them their arms and ammunition (February 1, 1929). This proved a death-blow to Ali Ahmad's prestige. With the best portion of his army gone, he naturally desired to have a larger number of tribesmen on his side. The Khogianis and Shinwaris were approached and by promises of handsome rewards and high posts they were won over. But their leaders, Maliks Mohammad Jan, Mohammad Shah, and Qais had long-standing jealousies among themselves. When the second detachment which consisted mostly of Khogianis reached Omar Caves, Mohammad Shah went secretly to Kabul and had an interview with Bacha who treated him very kindly and gave him a large sum of money together with promises of greater bounty if he succeeded in dispersing Ali Ahmad Jan's forces. On his return at Barikow, he met Malik Mohammad Jan, who having gained knowledge of his

treachery, rebuked him soundly. A fight took place between them and their followers joined in the affray. As a result, both the leaders were killed. Ali Ahmad Jan soon found himself involved in a bloody conflict. His magazine was looted, and he himself with his two sons had to fly for life, as some men were anxious to take them prisoner and hand them over to Bacha in the hope of obtaining the proclaimed rewards.

Ali Ahmad Jan made straight for the Laghman Valley. Here he fell in the hands of a nomadic tribe, and if some of the local tribes had not come to his rescue, he would have been taken to Kabul. After his release, he left for the Kunar Valley, and thence after many hardships, he at last reached British India through the Mohmand territory and having stayed for a few days at Peshawar, proceeded to Kandahar to meet Amanullah Khan.

After Ali Ahmad Jan's flight to Peshawar, the tribal feuds in the east took the form of a very serious civil war and this state continued till the arrival of Sardar Mohammad Hashim Khan, a brother of the present King, who through his influence and

friendly advice succeeded to a great extent in bringing peace to the unfortunate people of the Eastern Province.

CHAPTER VI

KANDAHAR

A few hours after his abdication, Amanullah Khan left for Kandahar in a motor car. He could not make good his escape by means of an aeroplane, as he had at first thought, because he was told that the aerodrome was within range of the enemy. He was afraid that his passage to Kandahar would not be a safe one. The snow had fallen deep and the Ghazni-Kabul Road was almost blocked. Moreover, the Bacha had got wind of his intention and had despatched a few of his men on horses to prevent his escape. Near Arghandi some 12 miles from Kabul, his car stuck deep in the snow and he had to wait for two hours before his men were able to drag it out. No sooner did he leave the place than the band of pursuers appeared on the scene. Thus it was more by luck than anything else that he succeeded in reaching his destination on the third day (16th January 1929).

At Kandahar the ex-King was received very coldly. No one came out to meet him;

the faces of those in the streets indicated plainly that they had no sympathy for him. He was obliged to call a meeting in which he fully explained to his audience the causes that had brought about the revolution. He admitted that he had committed blunders, and that in order to put an end to the bloody civil war, caused by his rash and misguided steps and owing to the general hatred of the people for himself and his regime, he was obliged to abdicate in favour of his elder brother, Inayatullah Khan. In the end, he asked them to co-operate with the Kabul Government in establishing peace and to send in their allegiance to Inayatullah Khan. The audience did not promise anything. Some of them rebuked him for his unwise steps, others were bold enough to tell him to his face that they could not help him in any way and that he should seek assistance from his ignorant and treacherous courtiers, who were the real cause of this national catastrophe. In fact, they were not prepared to accept Inayatullah Khan or any member of his family as their king. Nor did they hold any brief for the Bacha, whom they knew to be a low-born illiterate person with

a notorious past and totally incapable of governing the country.

In the following Friday prayer, the name of Amanullah Khan was left out of the *khutbah* (sermon), even though no other name was substituted for it. The next day Amanullah Khan received telegraphic news of his brother Inayatullah Khan's flight to Peshawar and the capture of the Arg by the Bacha. Not much later Inayatullah Khan joined his brother at Kandahar. Even his arrival and the horrible stories of Bacha's atrocities left the people untouched. It was at this time that some of the Royal Guards who after the fall of Kabul had left for their homes succeeded in reaching Kandahar. They went round the city giving vivid and horrifying details of the Reign of Terror and expressing fears of Bacha's arrival at Kandahar. But nothing could rouse the people's sympathies for the ex-King who was at last obliged to contemplate a speedy departure. Before leaving, he held a meeting, invited some of the local chiefs and told them that he intended to leave for Herat in a couple of days, and that Sardar Inayatullah Khan and Ulya-Hazrat, his mother, would

be left in Kandahar to look after the local affairs. From Herat, he declared, he would proceed to Mizar-i-Sharif, whence he would lead an army for an attack on Kabul. By this time, the people had fully realized the danger that was in store for them. Rumours were rife that the Bacha was the worst enemy of the Durranis, whom he had sworn to extirpate, and that a very strong army was being equipped to march on Kandahar to carry out his wicked designs. These horrible news roused the Kandaharis from their lethargy, and in sheer self-defence they promised Amanullah Khan full support with men and money.

Amanullah Khan was not slow to avail himself of this opportunity. He once more declared himself King, and formed a Cabinet, which mostly consisted of those treacherous and ease-loving courtiers who had been the cause of his downfall. Some well-informed Kandahari Chiefs warned him against the consequences of such a repetition of his past indiscretions, but he paid no heed to their counsel, and when pressed very hard, threatened to leave for Herat rather than pass over his favourites.

Slowly, the Kandaharis began to mobilize. Levies from Farah and Herat answered the call. Abdul Ahad Khan, a Verdak Chief and the present President of the National Assembly was sent towards Ghazni at the head of the first detachment to stop the advance of the Bacha's forces, who had by this time succeeded in breaking through the Verdak tribes, and were marching on Ghazni.

The Bacha, it will be remembered, had after occupying Kabul, concentrated his whole attention on the east, where Ali Ahmad Jan, his formidable rival, was busy in making great preparations for an attack on the capital. He had nothing to fear from the ex-King ; he knew his weaknesses and the general hatred of the people for him. Besides, Kandahar was a month's journey from Kabul, and now that the snow was knee-deep, the Kandahar-Kabul Road was blocked ; there was no reason to apprehend an attack from that quarter. So he was content to send small detachments towards Ghazni, and station the major portion of his army at But-Khak to meet the onslaught of Ali Ahmad Jan's men. After the collapse of

Ali Ahmad Jan at Jagdilak, and till the arrival of Sardar Mohammad Hashim Khan, the eastern tribes being involved in internal warfare, could give little cause for anxiety, and he could afford to devote his whole attention to other sides.

For the conquest of Kandahar, he did not deem it necessary to send a very strong force. He knew that the ex-King would not be warmly received even by members of his own tribe. Sher Jan knew the ways of frustrating Amanullah Khan's plans. In addition to the treacherous courtiers, who were Sher Jan's friends in disguise, all the powerful tribes living between Ghazni and Kandahar were won over by the clever Chamberlain. But he had a powerful enemy to crush before his forces could co-operate with those tribes and march on Kandahar. The land between Ghazni and Sheikhabad is the home of the brave and warlike Verdaks. Led by Karim Khan, Lala Abdullah Khan, and his brother, Abdul Ahad Khan, the Verdaks were in no way prepared to accept Bacha as their King, or to give him free passage through their territory. Money or force could not influence them. Several

times the Bacha tried to break through their ranks, but his attacks were repulsed with heavy losses. Many a time this small band of heroes succeeded in utterly routing the Bacha's regiments, and capturing large quantities of arms and ammunition. Once or twice the Bacha and his brother had narrowly escaped capture and death at their hands. Bribes, promises of high rewards and good posts could not deter the brave Verdaks from their determination. But unfortunately after a heroic resistance of some three months, Karim Khan, their leader, fell a prisoner in Bacha's hands, who had him killed. The loss of this able leader was a great blow to his followers and the Bacha's men were at last able to march through their territory and occupy Ghazni, before Abdul Ahad Khan who was sent from Kandahar had time to arrive at the scene.

On the 26th March, Amanullah Khan left Kandahar at the head of a large army. He encamped at Manzil Bagh about three miles from the City on the Kabul-Kandahar Road. Full four days were spent here in organizing and equipping his men. It was here that he got the sad news of an

insurrection at Herat, and of the deaths of his Governor and the Military Commander.

On the morning of 30th March, he began his march and by stages reached Ghazni in sixteen days. All along the way the King had met with some resistance from the local tribes which he had easily overcome. But the royal army was extremely undisciplined and sacked some of the villages on the road. This greatly incensed the other tribes who were anxiously waiting for an opportunity to avenge themselves. They kept a close watch on this army and any one who lost his way or was left behind soon found himself in the hands of enemies, who did not show him any mercy.

The Hazaras did not fail to send in their levies. Large numbers of them joined the royal standard with the result that when Amanullah Khan reached Ghazni, he found himself at the head of a host of about thirty thousand. But it was a heterogeneous army utterly lacking in cohesion and not to be easily controlled by a few unprincipled officers.

The treacherous courtiers watched the movements of Amanullah Khan very closely.

Wherever he went he was followed by one of them. No real well-wisher of the King was allowed to approach his person, and if by chance some one succeeded in his attempt to meet him, doubts were cast upon his loyalty and his words were discredited.

The fort of Ghazni was easily besieged, the enemy was cut off from Kabul, and it seemed probable that Ghazni would open its gates in a day or two. But every day that passed helped towards the demoralization of this vast host. Important strategical posts captured after heavy sacrifices were soon after deserted, clearly showing evidences of treachery. Some of the loyal and experienced officers and tribal chiefs such as Abdul Ahad Khan and Lala Abdullah Khan advised Amanullah Khan to quit the siege of Ghazni and march straight on Kabul through the territory of the Verdaks, who were impatiently waiting for his arrival. But the King did not trust; on the contrary, he sometimes openly accused them of secretly planning to hand him over to the Bacha. These officers being bitterly disappointed and checkmated everywhere found it worse than useless to co-operate. The favourites now found

themselves free to carry out their plans ; urging on the King the futility of continuing the campaign, and advising him to seek his safety in flight, they soon prevailed upon him, and all of a sudden on the 26th of April at about 9 in the night, the order for immediate retreat was given.

This unexpected turn was a great shock to the well-wishers of the country. They implored the King to stick to his guns, but all in vain. The royal army was soon marching on the Kandahar Road in a very disorderly manner closely pursued by the Bacha's men and by some of the local tribes. At every stage they were attacked and fired at and large numbers were killed. Once or twice the King found himself encompassed by these tribal *lashkars* and could only make his escape after a severe engagement. With great difficulty he reached Mohmand, the last post on the Kandahar Road. He did not enter the city, but calling the members of his family, he left for Chaman in cars. From Chaman, he proceeded to Bombay, where after a short stay at the Taj Mahal Hotel, necessitated by the birth of his daughter, he left for Rome, where he has been living since.

After his departure Ali Ahmad Jan who was then at Kandahar once more declared himself King. But he was not to enjoy his kingship for long. The Saqaoists were on their way to Kandahar. The city was soon besieged and Ali Ahmad Jan found himself surrounded by the enemy and deserted by his soldiers. The terrified citizens at once opened the gates. Ali Ahmad Jan with a few of his faithful followers tried to force his way through one of the city gates, but most of his men lost their lives in the attempt and he himself escaped narrowly. He took shelter in one of the private houses, but was soon discovered, taken to Kabul, and kept in the Arg for a few days. He was paraded through the streets of the city in the most ignominious way, taken to the aerodrome, and finally blown from cannon's mouth (July 9, 1929).

CHAPTER VII

Glimpses of Hope

The fall of Kabul into the hands of brigands and bandits and the inauguration of the Reign of Terror was everywhere received with feelings of sorrow and grief, but it told most heavily on one, who was at this time lying on the sick-bed thousands of miles away in a villa in France, pale and emaciated, and in a very delicate state of health. The doctors considered it essential for him to have perfect rest, and had ordered that no disturbing news should reach him. Yet his burning desire, to know how his motherland was faring, overcame the resistance of his brothers who attended on him and who were persuaded to read out the news to him constantly. For the frail exterior concealed a patriot's heart which was bleeding at the sufferings of the unfortunate Afghans, and every now and then the spirit would feel restless and long to be by the side of the unhappy victims of bloodshed and oppression, but finding the flesh too weak would wait and brood and strengthen its

determination a thousand-fold for the time to come. This noble being was none other than Marshal Mohammad Nadir Khan, the present ruler of Afghanistan, and with him were his brothers, Sardar Mohammad Aziz Khan, Sardar Mohammad Hashim Khan and Sardar Shah Wali Khan. On his sick-bed he had been watching the course of events in Afghanistan. Finally when the news of Bacha's success reached him, he could no longer suffer his state of enforced inaction and asked to be taken to Afghanistan. Neither the doctors' warning nor the persuasion of the brothers was of any avail. He was told that the constant anxiety in which he was living had done him no good and that the strain of a long journey might imperil his very life. But nothing could shake his determination. All that he knew was that his motherland called him and he dared not disobey. On a stretcher they carried him to the railway station. People shook their heads dubiously and very few hoped that he would manage to reach his destination. But God had ordained that through him Afghanistan should be saved. In the following pages we shall read how this bold and courageous

H.M. KING MOHD NADIR SHAH AND HIS BROTHERS.

The late Sardar Mohd Aziz Khan

H. M. the King.

H. R. H. Sardar Mohd Hashim Khan

H.R.H. Sardar Shah Wali Khan

H. R. H. Sardar Shah Mahmud Khan

patriot rose, as it were, from his sick-bed and after months of hard labour and innumerable sacrifices succeeded at last in restoring peace and order in Afghanistan; but before we do that, let us glance at his early life and his past career, for the man, who was soon to hold the reins of Government and prove to be the Saviour of his country, had never lacked those qualities which later proved to be his best equipment in the service of his motherland.

H. M. King Mohammad Nadir Shah-i-Afghan, the second son of the late Sardar Mohammad Yusuf Khan, was born on April 9, 1883. In him are united the two royal houses of Mohammadzais and Sadozais. On his father's side, he is the great-grandson of Sardar Sultan Mohammad Khan, son of Sardar Payindah Khan, the founder of Mohammadzais; and on his mother's side he descends from Ahmad Shah Abdali (1747—1773 A.D.), the founder of modern Afghanistan.

Even in his early life, he was distinguished for his prudence, determination, bravery and liberality shown on many a memorable occasion and in the cause of the nation, which he has been assiduously serving

since 1904. The value of his last and greatest act yet remains to be truly evaluated, although it is of course universally acknowledged that, but for the part played by him in the last phase of Afghan History, Afghanistan would probably have ceased to be an independent country.

After completing his education, he joined the Afghan Army at the early age of 20, when he was appointed a Colonel of the Royal Body-Guards. But he soon showed uncommon ability and H. M. Amir Habibullah Khan was so pleased with his work that he was promoted to Brigadier-Generalship (1906). Three years later, in 1909, a rising broke out in the Southern Province and within a short time the rebels gathered so much force that they began to prepare for an attack on Kabul. Amir Habibullah Khan was at his wits' end and it was Sardar Mohammad Nadir Khan who saved the situation, and through his sagacity and bravery succeeded not only in rounding up the rebels, but in winning these tribes over to the Amir's side. The Amir was so pleased with his tact and generalship that he immediately appointed him to the post of

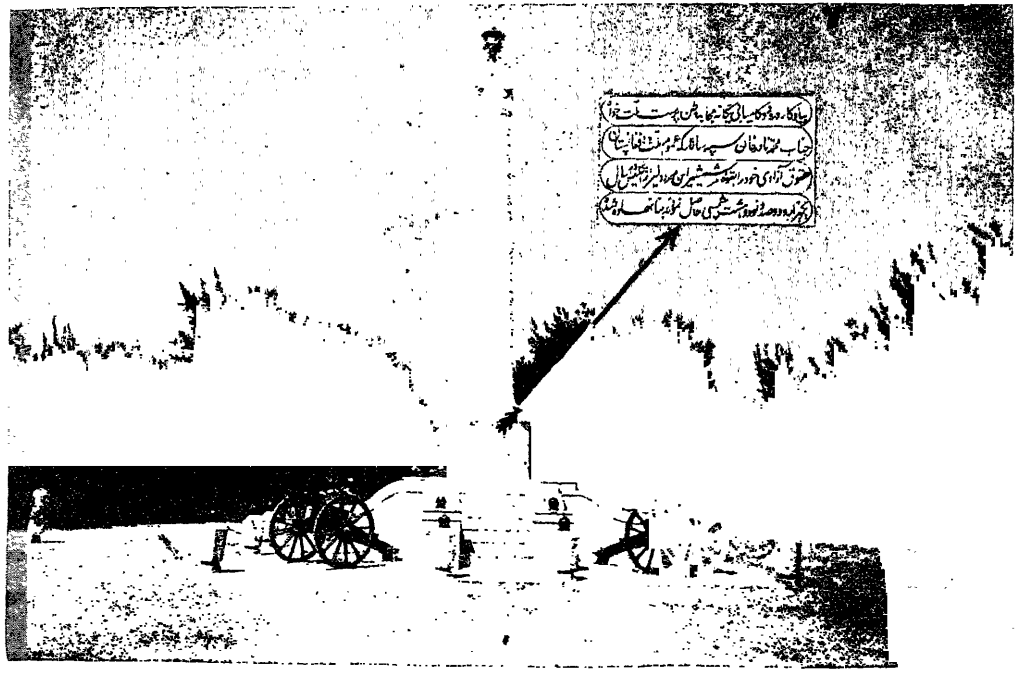
Commander-in-Chief. During the remaining days of Amir Habibullah Khan's reign, Sardar Mohammad Nadir Khan and members of his family, all men of great ability and exceptional administrative capacity, did their best for the advancement of their motherland. It was chiefly through their efforts that progressive measures were adopted by H. M. Amir Habibullah Khan, and so wisely and conscientiously did this noble family work in the discharge of their duties that wherever they went, and whatever offices they held, they endeared themselves to the people and won a high place in their esteem.

The family continued to serve the country in the reign of King Amanullah Khan and never willingly withdrew its co-operation. It was due to their heroic actions in the Third Afghan War (1919) that the country gained its independence. Had it not been for the military achievements of Marshal Mohammad Nadir Khan at Thal and those of his brothers Shah Wali Khan and General Shah Mahmud Khan at Wana in Waziristan and Paiwar Pass, the Amaniyyah Government would long have ceased to exist. H. M. King Amanullah Khan was not slow in realizing

the value of this historic success, and he erected a pillar near the Ministry of War to commemorate this brilliant achievement of the Commander-in-Chief. The words on this pillar are :

In memory of the unique success and entry of the patriotic and national hero, Sardar Mohammad Nadir Khan, Commander-in-Chief, by the valour of whose sword the Afghan Nation won its independence from the British in the year 1298 (Solar Era), the pillar has been erected.

But the brilliant career of Sardar Mohammad Nadir Khan and his brothers stimulated the jealousies of the Court. Their long and laborious services which had made them the idols of the nation, raised a host of enemies, who were determined by every means in their power to bring about their downfall. These worthless and selfish courtiers seized every opportunity to poison the mind of King Amanullah against them. What they wanted was that no honest man should be allowed to retain office under the Government, so that they might be able to fatten themselves on bribes, and embezzle public money to their heart's content. They fully knew that so



The Pillar of Independence, Kabul.

After the Victory at Thal.

long as Sardar Mohammad Nadir Khan or any one of his family was among them, they would not be able to carry out their mischievous plans.

The King, too, being young and raw, could not see through their destructive designs. He soon forgot the meritorious services of this noble family and began to depend upon the advice of those incapable and selfish courtiers, who made him promulgate those unpopular laws, which the nation was not prepared to accept and ultimately brought about the Revolution of 1924. Sardar Mohammad Nadir Khan, then Commander-in-Chief, wanted to settle the matter amicably by calling a *Jirgah*, but the King, led astray by his courtiers who had absolutely no knowledge of the military superiority of the insurgents, declared war, with what disastrous results we have already reviewed (*vide* Chapter I). Marshal Nadir Khan knew the futility of such an action and in protest resigned his post. He was then appointed Afghan Minister at Paris, but even there differences with King Amanullah Khan and his Government obliged him to resign and retire to private life in a quiet French villa. But though no longer

connected officially with his motherland, he neither forgot it nor ceased to send his protests against the unwise steps that were being taken. On their part his countrymen never forgot him and his long series of sincere and unselfish services. Thus we find that from the very first day of the Bacha's rule, all eyes were turned on him and his brothers, on whom alone rested the hopes of the oppressed for their deliverance ; and on the other side we observe that this national out-cry was not left unheard. Though quite unable to move, the Marshal determined to reach his motherland at all costs. He could not keep himself away when his countrymen were in the grip of the brigand chief and undergoing the oppression and cruelty of the Reign of Terror.

CHAPTER VIII

The Journey

Marshal Nadir Khan with his two brothers, Sardar Mohammad Hashim Khan and Sardar Shah Wali Khan left Nice on the 25th January 1929. He was taken to the S. S. "Kaiser-i-Hind" on a stretcher. For the first few days of the voyage he was very weak and had repeated attacks of delirium. But even then he could not forget his motherland, and would not consent to discontinuing the voyage. Several times his brothers requested him to take a little rest in one of the ports *en route*, but the brave Marshal would answer, "You know my destination. There is no rest for me till I reach there, dead or alive."

Fortunately, after crossing the Suez Canal, his health began to show signs of improvement, so much so that when the boat reached Bombay (10th February), the Marshal though still very weak, was able to walk a few steps unaided, and the attacks of delirium recurred no more.

He was given a hearty reception at

the port, where a large gathering of notables had come out to meet him. Thence he was taken to the Afghan Consulate where a grand meeting was held in his honour. He was requested to give his opinion about the future of Afghanistan. His reply was brief and to the point. After expressing his deepest sorrow for the national catastrophe caused by the unwise and misguided actions of its ruler, he said, "I am proceeding to Afghanistan solely with the object of doing my best to restore peace and order and to unite the different tribes now at war with one another. I cannot foretell the result, but this much I can assure you that I will either achieve my object or lay down my life in the attempt." His health did not permit him to stay long in the meeting, so he proceeded to the Taj Mahal Hotel, where he stayed for a few days, during which time, contrary to the advice of his doctors, he took no rest, but continued to study the Afghan problem and the ways and means of coping with the situation.

Many newspaper correspondents asked him to give his opinion on the situation in Kabul. To all he would make this brief

Marshal Mohd Nadir Khan at Bombay.

Shah Wali Khan and Sardar Shah Mahmud Khan in the South.

answer, "Myself and the members of my family have resolved to serve the motherland at this critical moment. Our only aim is to re-establish peace and to extinguish the fire of civil war now ablaze, which if it last longer, will, we are quite sure, ultimately ruin it and deprive it of its prestige and independence."

During his short stay at Bombay, the Marshal had a very busy time. He published some pamphlets containing his views on the Afghan problem and sent these to different quarters of Afghanistan, asking his countrymen to abstain from the bloodshed and civil war and to settle their differences by calling a *Jirgah*, to which representatives from all parts of the country should be invited. In a certain meeting at Bombay, he openly declared his policy in the following words: "My object in going to Afghanistan is to ask my countrymen to give up this internecine warfare and settle their differences amicably by means of a *Jirgah*, in which they might elect a wise and energetic man from among themselves as their King. I am neither against King Amanullah Khan

nor Ali Ahmad Jan, nor would I take any steps against them. I will do whatever is best in the interest of my country; and will only take sides with that party or individual whose aim is to render sincere service to the country, and has the people's sympathies." When some of the Indians persisted in their demand that he should work for the ex-King and do his best to get back the throne for him, he would reply, "I have the deepest feelings of sympathy for King Amanullah Khan, and am extremely sorry for all the calamities that by his rash and misguided steps, he has brought upon himself and his country, but as for his reinstatement I cannot promise anything, as it is not in my power to make the people accept him as their King. The election of a king is the right of the people themselves and whoever has their love and confidence and is a true well-wisher of the country will naturally be elected for this onerous duty."

From Bombay to Peshawar the Marshal was everywhere received very heartily. Large numbers of people came to the railway stations

to catch a glimpse of the famous Afghan Commander-in-Chief on whom alone, it was whispered, rested the fate of the country. They would put to him various questions on the topic and his answers were always in the strain shown in the above extracts.

Peshawar.—The Marshal and his brothers reached Peshawar on the 19th February. A large number of people and many influential tribal chiefs had come to meet him at the railway station. During his short stay at Peshawar, he knew no rest, engrossed as he was in a minute study of the problems lying ahead. Ali Ahmad Jan and some other Afghans who were at this time in Peshawar came to see him and supplied him with the information they possessed and the local chiefs insisted that he should go to Kandahar and help the ex-King, being, strangely enough unaware, even then of the general hatred of the Afghans for Amanullah Khan. In their blind and over-zealous sympathy for a Muslim State, they wanted to force upon the people a king who had been tried for several years and found wanting. Marshal Nadir Khan, who knew his fellow-countrymen

far better than these people, tried his best to bring home to them the real situation. He told them plainly that he was not against the ex-King, for whom he had every sympathy; but that he himself had neither the right nor the power to force the people to accept him as their king. He refused to proceed to Kandahar where the ex-King was making preparations for an attack on Kabul, telling them plainly that he would not be able to do anything there. We have already observed (Chapter VI) how Ali Ahmad Jan, who led away by the exhortations of these men went to Kandahar, was unable to do anything useful and had ultimately to pay with his life.

Marshal Nadir Khan was too wise to be led astray by these people, who had absolutely no knowledge of the Afghan mentality and who in their religious fervour wanted that the affairs of a foreign country should follow the trend of their desires. Their abortive efforts relative to the Turkish question and the Caliphate problem had shown at once their earnestness and their sympathy for their brethren-in-faith, and their ignorance of practical politics.

After making necessary preparations, the Marshal sent Sardar Mohammad Hashim Khan to the Eastern Province where once he had been Governor and commanded great influence and respect; and he himself with S. Shah Wali Khan proceeded to the Southern Province *via* Kohat.

The South.—As soon as the Bacha succeeded in usurping the throne at Kabul, he tried under the guidance of his Chamberlain to consolidate his government by winning over to his side all those experienced and capable officers who, in spite of their devoted service, had not been treated well by the ex-King. Amongst these he regarded the Marshal's family as the most important and approached it first. He knew of the long and distinguished services of its members and the highest esteem and popularity that they enjoyed throughout Afghanistan. He fully realized that if he succeeded in obtaining their help and co-operation, he need not fear anybody, and his government would be soon established on a sound basis. With this end in view, he treated the members of the Marshal's family at Kabul

most honourably and requested Sardar Shah Mahmud Khan to go to the Southern Province, and to use his family influence in winning the tribes to his side. Another letter was sent through Sardar Ahmad Shah Khan to the Marshal and his brothers in France asking them to return to their motherland, promising them the highest positions that they cared to have. But even Sher Jan, clever as he was, could not foresee that though all the members of this noble family had been ill-treated by the ex-King they were in no way ready to throw in their lot with robbers and brigands, whose rule was a national disgrace and, if prolonged, would prove fatal to the existence of Afghanistan as a free country.

Sardar Shah Mahmud Khan, who was on the look-out for an opportunity to serve his countrymen, was not slow to take advantage of this opportunity. He left Kabul with a few of his friends, and by way of Khushi and Dobandi, reached the Southern Province. He went from place to place holding *Jirgahs* and telling the people all about the Reign of Terror and the wretched

and helpless condition of the people in general and the capital in particular. He tried to make them understand the impending national calamity and asked them to join hands in exterminating the cruel regime. He emphasized the fact that within the short period of Saqao's rule Afghanistan had been nearly ruined; her trade was crippled, her credit dead and her prestige gone. She was on the brink of complete annihilation and nothing but a united effort could save them.

It was here that General Shah Mahmud Khan got the happy news of his brothers' arrival in India. He was impatient to meet them and to know of the health of Marshal Nadir Khan. He, therefore, left for India, but he had not to go very far. In Parachinar, he met his brothers. The three had a long talk wherein the General gave all the details of the revolution, with its attendant horrors. Needless to say, the sad story of Afghanistan's pitiable plight was a long and a sorrowful one and the Marshal's eyes grew dim as one by one the terrible implications of the situation were unfolded before him.

There was no time to lose. He resolved to enter his native land, to save his brethren from the cruel grip of the brigand chief. He knew he had neither men nor money, nor good health. The enemy was in possession of the capital and the public treasury; and had a formidable standing army well armed and well equipped. He also knew that any action on his part would lead the cruel and relentless autocrat to arrest the remaining members of his family then in Kabul, and put them to indescribable tortures. But nothing could deter him from his purpose. He immediately despatched General Shah Mahmud Khan with necessary instructions to Jaji, and himself with Sardar Shah Wali Khan left for Khost.

Khost.—The Marshal and his brother accompanied by Sayed Sharif Khan and Nawab Khan reached Khost on the 9th March. A large number of tribal chiefs and Government officials had come out to meet their renowned Commander-in-Chief on the Afghan border. Noor Mohammad Khan's regiment paid its respect with a salute of 31 guns. Military bands, national dances and other

ceremonies indicated explicitly the high esteem of the people for their well-wisher, who in spite of his ill-health had come to save them once more from destruction and ruin. Everyone sincerely hoped that they would soon see the end of their dark days. To them it was a day of national festivity and happiness. The Marshal, though still extremely weak in body, went round from place to place and embraced all the chiefs and officers who were anxiously waiting for him. Then he made a brief speech telling them how at a time when, due to his long illness he was confined to bed, he had heard the sad news of the revolution, and of the coming of the Bacha to the throne. The news had had no little effect upon his already weak constitution. But he could have no peace of mind. He could not bear to see his countrymen involved in a bloody civil war and undergoing the hardships and oppression of the Bacha and his partisans. On reaching Peshawar he had sent his brother Mohammad Hashim Khan to the Eastern Province, and himself with Shah Wali Khan had come to them to work together

against the common enemy of the nation, who through the treachery of the Court and the misguided steps of the ruler had succeeded in usurping the throne and was heading for national destruction and ruin. He finished his speech by declaring that he meant to convene a *jirgah* after *Id*, in which a programme of action would be drawn up which, with their help, he would try to carry out. After this he left for the Cantonment, where necessary arrangements had been made for his lodging.

The general condition of the country at this time.—Before narrating the activities of Sardar Mohammad Nadir Khan and his brothers in this drama of national salvation, let us consider the condition of the different provinces at the time of their arrival.

Kabul, the most unfortunate of all the provinces, was, as we have already observed, in the cruel clutches of the Bacha and his men, and people were living in unholy terror of them. Thousands had lost their lives on mere suspicion, and many were still undergoing various kinds of tortures in the dungeons and prison houses.

In Kandahar Amanullah Khan had once more declared himself King. But he had entirely lost his prestige and was held in extreme contempt. There was also a general hatred for the Bacha, and all were desirous of seeing the end of his cruel regime.

Herat, though nominally under the Kandahar Government, and governed by Mohammad Ghaus Khan and Mohammad Ibrahim Khan, was not in favour of Amanullah Khan, and was in no way prepared to help him in recapturing the capital.

In the north the Bacha had succeeded in occupying Mizar-i-Sharif; but there was a general hatred against his high-handedness and cruelty, and every one was anxiously waiting for an opportunity to avenge his grievances.

The Eastern Province was involved in an inter-tribal civil war, and only the greedy among the influential chiefs, anxious to share the spoils, had sent their allegiance to the Bacha.

The Hazaras, like the Verdaks, were making a bold stand against the ingression of Bacha's forces, and had several times succeeded in routing them.

The province of Qatghan, though completely under Bacha's sway, was groaning under his maladministration and tyrrany.

The Southern Province was yet undecided. The people had many grievances against the ex-King, who had very cruelly treated them during the Revolution of 1924. Gratified at his abdication, they were yet in no way prepared to accept Bacha as their king. Unfortunately, there was no co-operation between them, and their inter-tribal jealousies taught Mohammad Siddiq, Sher Jan's brother, who was then commanding the Gardez Regiment, to avail himself of the opportunity. He bribed some of the chiefs and thus succeeded in winning them over to his side. The result was that a sort of civil war had broken out, and the people had fallen upon Government buildings and cantonments, pillaging and burning wherever they went. Only three cantonments, those of Khost, Gardez and Urgoon, had escaped this general destruction. But even in these places the situation was very critical; the garrisons were beseiged and

Government magazines were threatened. When the happy news of the Marshal's arrival reached Khost, the garrison turned out to welcome him and for the first time in three months saw anything like a gleam of hope in the distant horizon.

CHAPTER IX

Difficulties

In order to make a correct estimate of the true worth of the Marshal's achievements and to understand the full value of the part that he and his energetic brothers played in this drama of national deliverance, let us make a brief study of the various difficulties which they had to face at every step. Their courage and heroism were frequently put to severe tests; and they were called upon to make many sacrifices during the period of six long months at the end of which they at last succeeded in bringing about the fall of that cruel autocrat, the Bacha, and restoring peace and order in a country torn to shreds by the incessant civil war of nearly a year's duration. Several times were they repulsed, and strong military posts were lost. More than once were they nearly deserted by their followers. To the outside world—nay even to the Afghans themselves—at times it appeared probable that ere long they would give up the apparently

unequal struggle and leave their countrymen to their fate. But Marshal Nadir Khan and his brothers were of sterner stuff than to leave their country and take refuge in foreign lands. They were resolved to win or die.

One of their greatest difficulties was money. The Marshal and his brothers, even in the earlier days of prosperity were by no means affluent. All the members of their family, throughout their careers, had held high and responsible posts, but they had the expenses of a large family to defray, and what they could spare was spent in acts of charity and benevolence of a national character. The Marshal when he was Commandar-in-Chief had founded the National School—*Maktab-i-Milli*—and nearly half of his pay and more than half of the income from his estate went to meet its expenses, by no means a small drain on his meagre income. No member of this family had ever attempted to amass wealth by the usual unfair means. When they entered the Southern Province they were penniless and could not even feed those who had hastened to flock round

them. And unfortunately they had stepped into the poorest province of the country. In Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, or any other important town, they would have had no difficulty in obtaining money. But they were far away from these trade centres; and in place of money had to put to the best use they could the influence and the prestige won in the days when they had worked there as officers. Without any means of transport, with no commissariat and insufficient arms and ammunition, they boldly stepped into the arena and trusted to luck.

On the other hand, we find that the enemy was in possession of the capital and the public treasury. The whole of Koh Daman in the north—that land of fine and dauntless soldiers—was at his back. The wealthiest parts of the country and the best magazines were in his power. He also had in his iron grip the richest people in the land whom he could squeeze to the last farthing whenever it pleased him. Due to his resources, he had easily succeeded in maintaining a large standing army, well disciplined and well organized, whose number

at the time exceeded fifty thousand. The major portion of this formidable army with the best officers to command them was stationed in the strong military posts facing the Southern Province. The Bacha seems to have studied the situation thoroughly and had nothing to fear from other quarters. Only two thousand men sufficed for the Kandahar front; a few thousand rupees had frustrated the plans of Wali Ali Ahmad Jan, and with only a handful of men his agents Mohammad Qasim and Abdur Rahim Khan had marched straight up to Mizar-i-Sharif without meeting the slightest resistance. But the southern problem was a nightmare to the Bacha and his counsellors, for they knew the general popularity of the Marshal and his brothers. They were not ignorant of their military skill. They also knew fully the warlike character of the southern tribes. But with their vast resources they felt hopeful of ultimately bringing the Southern Province under their sway. The best soldiers and most experienced officers—the pick of Bacha's army—were despatched to the south. Mohammad Siddiq, Sher Jan's brother, a general of no ordinary capacity,

was appointed commander of these regiments. He succeeded in buying over some of the local tribes, who greatly multiplied the Marshal's difficulties by opposing his advance at every step. Among these tribes the Dari Khel stands out too prominently to be overlooked. Sardar Nadir Khan, while proceeding to Gardez, had to pass through their territory. The narrow valleys, the rugged mountains and the desperate opposition of the treacherous people, made his passage through this land next to impossible, and it was only after much difficulty and timely use of his diplomatic skill that he was ultimately able to cross that portion and proceed to Gardez.

Another difficulty, and no less harassing, was the false rumours concerning the Marshal's aim. By virulent propoganda the Bacha was trying to keep the tribes away from Marshal Nadir Khan. The only plausible charge that Saqao could find against him was the fact that he had been the ex-King's Commandar-in-Chief and could thus be supposed to be working in his interest, to re-establish him on the throne. At every step the Marshal had to make it clear

to the people that his sole aim was to release his country from the cruel grip of the ignorant miscreant and that he himself belonged to no party. He had to tell them that if he succeeded in driving out the Bacha, he would leave the election of the king to the nation itself to be discussed in a Grand Assembly, in which representatives from all parts of the country should take part. He had no desire to become a dictator—he loathed the idea—or to force a king upon them. Then the people would insist that if he was not fighting for the ex-King he should himself make a bid for the throne. This the Marshal was not willing to do. He openly declared that he had no desire to become king and that if the question of kingship was settled except by the Grand Assembly, there was no chance of a permanent peace in the country. It was not easy to make the illiterate people, who from centuries were accustomed to autocratic rulers, comprehend these democratic notions and realize their true value. The tribes still believed that the Marshal was fighting for Amanullah Khan and so bitter was the feeling against the ex-King that some of them,

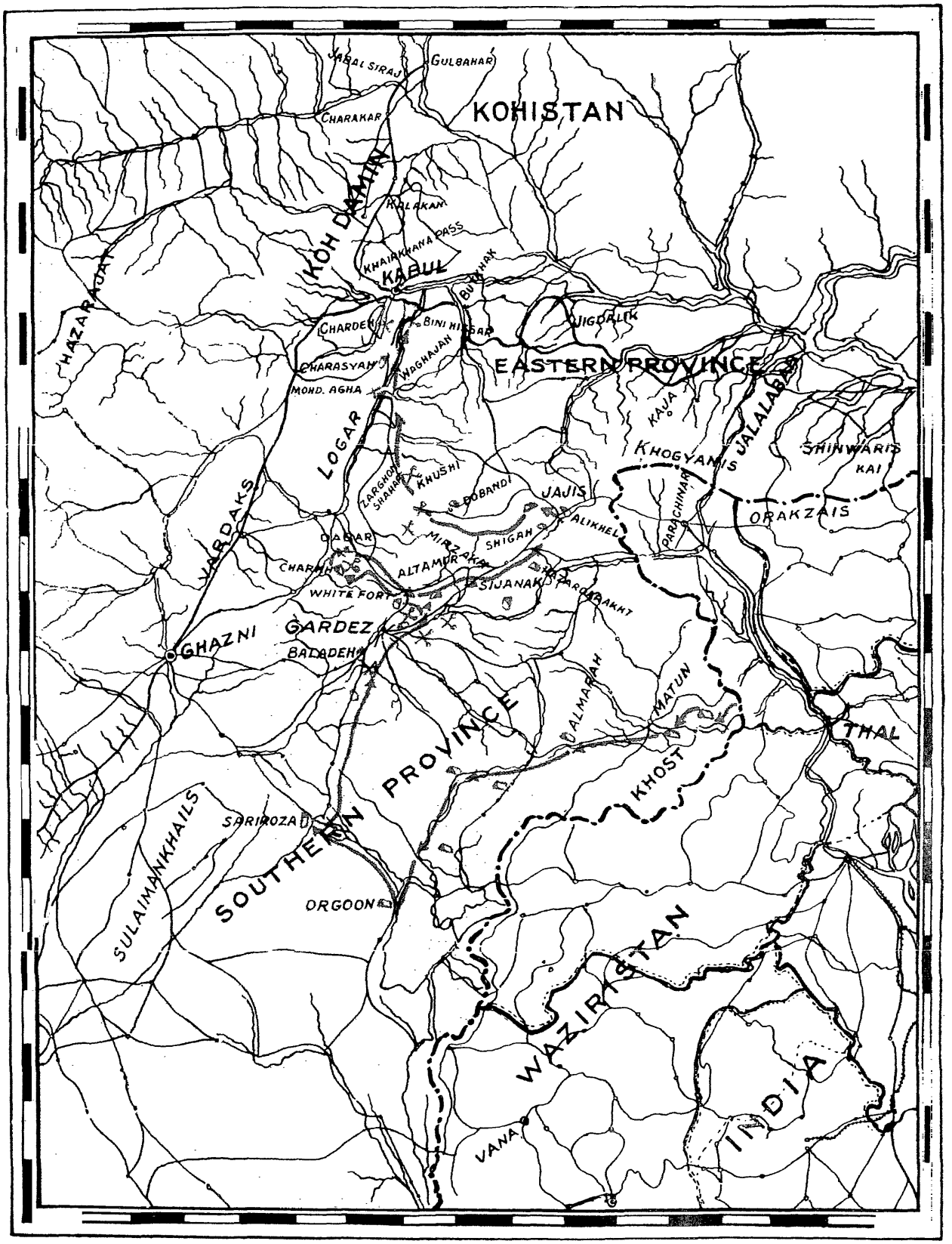
preferring even Bacha's rule, began to oppose the Marshal. In spite of his repeated declarations and pamphlets explaining his object and his attitude towards this question, some of the powerful tribes such as the Sulaiman Khel and Dari Khel sided with the Bacha.

Another difficulty—and of a different nature—which the Marshal and his brothers had to face very often was due to the diversity of opinions among the various tribes assembled round them. Some of these had longstanding jealousies and animosities among themselves and were always on the lookout for a chance to avenge their grievances. To settle their differences was not an easy job, because no side would give way; each would insist on deciding the question by use of arms. Thus at every step there was danger of a civil war, bringing into clash these tribes. It required all the Marshal's sagacity and diplomacy to keep this heterogeneous mass together.

In spite of all these obstacles and hindrances, the Marshal and his brothers decided to push on and to fight to the last, either to win or to lay down their lives in the

attempt. They knew they were fighting for the national cause. For them it was a war between right and wrong, where the goal on one side was peace, progress and prosperity, and on the other side cruelty, oppression and tyranny. And in their faith they found strength, and hope inspired their actions and proved to be their greatest equipment.

MAP SHOWING THE LINE OF ACTION OF H. M. KING MOHD. NADIR SHAH FROM KHOST TO KABUL.



ROADS
RIVERS
VILLAGES
TOWNS

LINE OF ACTION
HALTING STATION
FIELDS OF BATTLE
DURAND LINE

CHAPTER X

Line of Action

Soon after his arrival in Khost, Marshal Mohammad Nadir Khan sent letters to the tribal chiefs telling them that he had come to work with them in turning out the Bacha, and to do his best in restoring peace and order and thus saving Afghanistan from ruin and destruction. He asked them to assemble in a certain place and hold a meeting where these problems and the future line of action should be discussed.

On the 13th March—the 1st day of *Id*—all the tribes went to the golf links to say their prayers. After the ceremony, the Marshal got up and made a very pathetic speech, telling them that that *Id* was the most unlucky day for the nation ; a day of lamentation rather than of festivities. He explained to them all that had come to pass and the annihilation that threatened the nation. He asked them to lay aside their tribal jealousies so that they might be able to turn out the brigand whose very name was a disgrace to the nation, and had already lowered the

prestige of the country to a great extent. Such was the effect of this speech on the audience that there was general lamentation in Khost, and the happy day of *Id* actually became a day of mourning.

In Khost not a single day passed without seeing a large number of the tribal men answering the call of help. On the second day of *Id* a batch of 1,000 men made its appearance. The Marshal with his brothers went out to meet them. Such was their enthusiasm at seeing him that they danced and sang for joy. Their number daily increased and everybody began to hope that this tribal *lashkar* would soon be able to extirpate the cruel regime. But unfortunately the many difficulties, some of which we have already discussed in the previous chapter, made immediate action nearly impossible.

Dispute between the Wazir Refugees and the Southern Tribes.—It was at this time that the news reached the Marshal that there was imminent danger of a serious fight between the Wazir Refugees and the Southern Tribes. These Waziris, whose real home was in Waziristan, had left their territory and taken refuge in the

Southern Province during the reigns of Amir Habibullah Khan and King Amanullah Khan. They had been given some lands in the Khost District, but the southern tribes did not like to see them on their soil, and waited for an opportunity to drive them out. Now when the chance came, they surrounded these Wazir refugees and asked them to leave their lands or be prepared for war. The Waziris were not willing to give up their rights and the danger of a civil war was hourly increasing. When the Marshal was informed of this, he despatched a few of the influential chiefs to settle the matter amicably. This mission at last prevailed upon the Waziris to give up their rights and the contending parties took a solemn oath that thenceforth they would co-operate with each other and would relinquish their tribal jealousies. There was a general rejoicing on all sides, for every one was fully aware of the ugly turn that the affair might have taken. If a single bullet had been fired from either side, the matter would have been beyond control and the Waziris of the Trans-border would have felt obliged to assist their brethren.

Ahmadzais' Lashkar—On the 21st of

March, Mir Ghaus-ud-Din Khan, son of Jahandad Khan, the well-known Khan of Ahmadzais with some other tribal chiefs and six hundred men reached Khost. The Marshal according to the Afghan custom went out to meet them.

The Jirgah.—On the 22nd March a *Jirgah* was held in which all elders and tribal chiefs took part. The Marshal opened the proceedings. He briefly described the revolution and the object of his arrival in Afghanistan. Then he threw open to them for discussion his suggestions for action and for coping with the difficulties. After much discussion the tribes unanimously proposed as follows :—"Realizing the dangerous aspect of our country and with a view of relieving the nation from this catastrophe, we all propose that you should be our leader. We demand that before leaving this place you should accept our allegiance and give us full assurance that in case of success none but yourself would be our king. Specially we ask you to promise that you will have no connection whatsoever with Amanullah Khan, who as we have come to know, is now in Kandahar and is making preparations for an attack on Kabul, for we

have lost all faith and trust in him, and any connection with him is regarded by us as a great offence." But the Marshal would not accept kingship. He said, "My aim is not to take the throne, but I desire to settle the dispute that has arisen regarding the kingship. I advise you and those who are not present here that you should never pay allegiance to any one who has not been universally elected by the people. Otherwise civil war and disunion will never end. My sole object is the removal of these differences and the establishment, with your help and approval, of a Government on a firm and sound basis."

The refusal to accept the throne was not received without a murmur. But the Marshal was at last able to convince them and make them accept his view-point and it was unanimously agreed that they should proceed to Gardez and there invite the chiefs of all the tribes to a general assembly to discuss these problems.

Difficulty in the Distribution of Arms and Ammunition.—Within a fortnight of his arrival, the Marshal had easily succeeded in having round him a large *lashkar* consisting of various tribes, who in view

of the national catastrophe were bent upon fighting to the last. But their old jealousies and rivalries would often create difficulties. And the first problem to be solved after the close of this *Jirgah* was how to distribute arms among these tribes, because every one of them insisted upon having the lion's share. Moreover, the behaviour of a few clearly indicated that they had something up their sleeve and were probably bribed by Mohammad Siddiq to delay the departure of this *lashkar*.

But the personal influence of the Marshal once more prevailed and the arms were distributed in such a way that all parties were satisfied with it. The next problem was the line of action—how to proceed and by what route. Nobody doubted that the *lashkar* would reach Gardez without difficulty, but the Marshal knew that some of the tribes *en route* would try to put obstacles in his way, so he proposed to take a route whereby he could avoid their territory. Finally it was decided that the Marshal himself with the Jadrani *Lashkar* should proceed *via* Jadran, Sardar Shah Wali Khan at the head of Manglis *via* Mangal and Shah

Mahmud Khan who had recently returned should advance *via* Jaji.

Next day, when all was ready for departure, news arrived that a *lashkar* of some six thousand Mangals was coming to their help. The Marshal as usual went out to receive them. As soon as he appeared on the scene, the Mangals, overjoyed at seeing him, fired a volley in air and a light shower of rain and peals of thunder added a note of jubilance to the scene. The Marshal, in spite of the rain, went round and met their leaders, and addressed them for 20 minutes, explaining his intentions and his plan of action.

After he had finished his speech, a man from among the new-comers stepped forward and having expressed the heartiest welcome to the Marshal and his brothers narrated the causes that had brought about the revolution and the national catastrophe, emphasizing that all was due to the maladministration, luxury and negligence of the ruler and his immoral and irreligious steps towards the so-called reforms. He, therefore, requested that the Marshal should give them a solemn

assurance that he would in no way side with or work for him. Once more the Marshal was obliged to reiterate his views. As for the throne, he repeated, that whosoever occupied it should be duly elected by the representatives of the nation who should meet for this purpose in a Grand Assembly. In the end he told them that according to the decision of the last *Jirgah*, he was proceeding to Gardez, in order to hold a general *Jirgah* there, and that he would abide by the decision of that assembly, and carry out its behests to the best of his ability. A few hours later, the Sabari *Lashkar* also came to their help.

Tribal Clash.—At half past four every one was alarmed at the sound of rapid firing on all sides. The Ahmadzais who were inside the camp took the usual precautionary measures of defence. A few men were sent to find out the cause of the disturbance and discovered that the Mangals and Sabari tribes who had long-standing enmity were now bent upon avenging their grievances. But the Marshal

was again successful in settling the matter amicably.

Another dispute arose between the two Jadran clans, but the matter was again settled without recourse to arms.

CHAPTER XI

PREPARATIONS—I

To Gardez.—The Marshal at the head of his *lashkar* left Khost for Gardez on the 27th March, but this distance of only fifty miles took him more than a fortnight—17 days, to be exact—because he had to pass through the lands of some hostile tribes, who would not let him cross their territory, offering as a plea for their hostility the fear that the Marshal was working on behalf of the ex-King. It, therefore, became necessary for the Marshal at every step to enter into explanations in order to allay fears and doubts. The first day's march lay through the lands of the Dari Khels, who were not slow in showing their animosity and offered stubborn resistance. It was proved beyond all doubt that this tribe was instigated by Mohammad Siddiq and that a passage through their land could not be effected without danger. The Marshal was thus obliged to call a halt and encamp in the strong fort of Babrak Khan. A few elders were sent to the tribal chiefs to explain to them the aims and objects of the Marshal

and his *lashkar*. But the Dari-Khels were obstinate and refused passage. They were under the influence of a *dervish*, Levannai by name, who was in the Bacha's pay, and such was his hold over the tribes that none dared oppose him.

During this time the Marshal was busy day and night in publishing pamphlets explaining his objects and asking the tribes to co-operate and join hands against their common enemy, and thus save their country from utter annihilation.

The negotiation with the Dari-Khels continued for full three days. The only argument they offered for their opposition to the Marshal was that he was a partisan of the ex-King and was working on his behalf. When it was found that these people would not listen to reason and could not be prevailed upon to accept even the assurances of a *Jirgah*, the Marshal was obliged to use force, much against his will. After a few hours of hot and contested fighting, the Dari Khels were beaten and the Marshal was able to proceed towards Gardez. Nothing of any importance occurred for the next few days. The *lashkar* found no difficulty in reaching

Chankhawah *via* Orgoon and Zirak. At Chankhawah the Marshal was informed that all the tribes of Zurmat and Sari Roza had held a *Jirgah* in which they had resolved to oppose his advance putting forward the hackneyed plea that he was fighting for the ex-King. The strength of these tribes was well-known and it was impossible to force a march through them in the face of their combined resistance. The Marshal, therefore, despatched a few chiefs to remove misapprehensions. Negotiations dragged on for days but finally they were satisfied and not only repented of their rash action but promised to help the Marshal with men and money.

On the 5th April, he reached the military post of Orgoon. The local military force had come out to meet him, and as he passed through their ranks, he was greeted and welcomed with loud cheers. Large companies of tribal men also came to show their devotion for him. Some of their leaders went up to him and kissed his hands after the Afghan custom. His appearance was hailed with gun-fires, loud cheers and national dances. Wherever he went he found crowds awaiting to receive him. The Marshal was pleased to

know that the military force of Orgoon had held out in spite of severe threats from the tribes and had not surrendered their arms and ammunition. He promised to reward them handsomely for their sincere services and their brave resistance against such heavy odds.

Next day the *lashkar* left for Sari Roza. Rumours were heard that the Sulaiman Khel tribes meant to oppose their advance. The Marshal did not like the idea of effecting a passage through them by force, for that meant waste of time and energy, and dissipation of forces. Negotiations per proxy, he knew, could not solve the problem. He, therefore, invited some of their leaders and personally talked over the matter with them. He had to declare his policy once more. He said, "At such a critical time when the welfare, prestige and honour of our nation are in danger, how is it possible for any one of us to think of his personal welfare or individual interests. The present deplorable state of the nation demands that all of us should sacrifice our personal interests for the national cause. Let me tell you plainly that I am working neither for myself nor

for anybody else. My sole object is to serve my motherland, and to see it once more in perfect peace and order. Regarding the question of the future king of the country, I have to repeat my previous declarations that it entirely rests with the people. I have no right, nor am I willing to force any one upon you as your king. The election of a king is the right of the nation itself. Let the representatives from all parts consider this problem after the peace is restored. Till then let us work together and co-operate in bringing about the fall of our enemy. It was simply with this view that I left my sick-bed far away in France and have come to do my duty to my native land." The speech had the desired effect upon the audience. All of them were won over and most of them repented of their rash and unwise actions and promised that not only they would allow him a free passage through their lands but would assist him with men and money to the best of their resources.

The next day's march lay through Zurmat. The local tribes began to show signs of hostilities. It was at first decided that the *lashkar* should proceed straight

through their lands to the famous fort of Neknams, situated in the heart of the district, but Mohammad Rafique Khan, its owner, realizing his dangerous position, informed the Marshal about the evil intentions of the people, telling him that his advance in that direction would be strongly opposed by the local tribes, and requesting him to avoid the route and proceed by some other way. The same evening the *lashkar*, after so many hardships, reached the village of Ibrahimkhel—at a distance of some eight miles from Gardez. It was here that Levannai, the notorious Dari Khel *dervish*, with a few of his disciples came to meet the Marshal. He expressed sorrow at his past hostilities and promised to help him with his men in return for some money and a sufficient quantity of arms and ammunition.

Next day the *lashkar* left for Baladeh, the chief village of the Ahmadzai tribe, at a distance of some three miles from Gardez. There the Marshal called a halt and determined to make this village his headquarters for the time being. He did not choose Gardez, because it was then held by Mohammad Siddiq and his men, most

of whom were Kohdaminies, who were the Bacha's partisans. In Baladeh, the Marshal called a *Jirgah* of the southern tribes. All their chiefs were invited to this meeting. Invitations were also sent to Mohammad Siddiq, to the Governor of Gardez and to other influential local chiefs, all of whom responded except Mohammad Siddiq, who had no desire to discuss such matters. But it was at this time that Allah Nawaz Khan somehow succeeded in making his entry into the Gardez fort. He won over some of the chiefs to his side, and asked them to compel Mohammad Siddiq to take part in the meeting and if he refused, to threaten him that they would withdraw their help. They at last prevailed upon Mohammad Siddiq who was obliged to leave for Baladeh, but he took with him some three hundred men fully armed.

On the 15th April, S. Shah Wali Khan, who had left Khost by a different route, also reached Baladeh, where this heterogeneous host manned from widely divergent and mutually inimical tribes was massed together. Mohammad Siddiq, not slow to realize the possibilities of such a mixed army, succeeded at last in bringing about a clash among

the various rival tribes. In the evening, all of a sudden, there was rapid firing all round with fatal results. Who the enemy was, no one could definitely make out. It was, however, generally believed that Mohammad Siddiq was at the root of all this disturbance, because soon after the outbreak his three hundred men had secretly left for their headquarters. But in a state of panic everybody suspected everybody else. The disturbance did not last more than thirty minutes, but even in this short space of time many had lost their lives. When night fell, quiet was restored. Suspicion having rested very strongly on Mohammad Siddiq, and the Governor of Gardez, they were taken into custody, and the next day the Marshal appointed Sayed Mohammad Khan and Abdul Ghani Khan to be the Governor and the Military Commander of Gardez respectively.

CHAPTER XII

PREPARATIONS—II

Gardez and the East.—We have already noticed that on entering Afghanistan the Marshal had sent Sardar Mohammad Hashim Khan to the Eastern Province. It will be remembered that this province was the first that took up arms against the ex-King and that it was mainly through their activities that Amanullah Khan finally lost his throne. But once the war lust of the Afghan is roused, he cannot easily subdue it. After the expulsion of Amanullah Khan, the tribes remembered their old jealousies and rivalries and began to fight against one another, making the prospect of peace very uncertain. It was at a time like this that the Marshal's brother made his appearance among them. He went from place to place, advising them to give up this internecine warfare and to combine their forces against the common enemy of the nation. Most of the tribes withdrew from the civil war, but some had been bribed by the Bacha and continued to fight and thus obstruct the plans of Sardar

Mohammad Hashim Khan, whose task was, therefore, made extremely difficult. However, after incessant efforts on his part, their leaders at last agreed to send a mission to the Marshal with offer of help. This mission from the east consisting of 130 elders under the command of Mohammad Gul Khan, the well-known Mohmand chief, met the Marshal in Baladeh on the 19th April. People from all sides flocked to see them and learn their views on the question of the day. It was for the first time in the history of the country that representatives from the two rival provinces forgetting their tribal feuds had come together with the object of combining their forces against a common foe. The southerners were greatly pleased to see their allies and there was great rejoicing on all sides. A *jirgah* was held in which the mission submitted a written document containing the views of the eastern tribes. The first few items dealt with the causes of the revolution, and their justification for taking up arms against the ex-King. Then the situation of the day was fully discussed. The document declared

the Bacha to be an outlaw and a public enemy, one who was bent upon the destruction of the country and its people, and, therefore, considered it necessary that all the tribes should work together in expelling him and preserving national integrity. They suggested that the two provinces should, as a first step, send a joint mission to the Bacha informing him of their views and of the destruction that he had brought about and asking him to vacate the throne immediately, failing which he should be prepared for a combined attack from both the provinces.

All the eastern tribes had solemnly promised to ignore their mutual jealousies and enmities for the time being and to work unitedly towards the achievement of their common object, the turning out of the Bacha and his men. And finally the representatives from the Eastern Province keeping in view the past national services of the Marshal requested him to lead them in the field of battle in case of a war, as in their opinion no other person had the capacity for this responsible office. All the proposals were literally

accepted by the representatives of the southern tribes and the meeting ended.

Copies of the proceedings of this meeting were sent round to all the tribes. All except the Sulaiman Khel tribes answered the call. They would not agree and said they were busy. Furthermore, they demanded that if the Marshal was not working for the ex-King, he should send one of his brothers to them to lead them in their march towards Ghazni, where the ex-King was at the time busy in making preparations. This demand the Marshal was not willing to accept. His aim was to see the fall of the usurper and to restore peace and order; he was neither for nor against the ex-King; and on the very first day of his arrival he had openly and emphatically declared his policy. But the Sulaiman Khels would not agree. Their reply was astounding. They sent word that in their eyes Amanullah Khan was more dangerous than the Bacha and that only after they had succeeded in turning him out, would they turn their attention to the Bacha; and if in their opinion he was undesirable, there would be no difficulty in

bringing about his fall. The Marshal felt disappointed at the receipt of such a foolish reply and decided to proceed without them.

The Bacha on his side was not slow in realizing the danger from the south. He knew that every day that passed lessened his chances and lowered his prestige in the public eye. He could not bear to see the Marshal and his brothers working in the south. True, Amanullah Khan was advancing towards Ghazni, but he had no apprehension from that quarter, as he was aware of the waning prestige of the ex-King and also counted on the timely help of his powerful allies—the Sulaiman Khels. In the south, too, he had allies and powerful ones, but here he had to face an experienced general —a man of exceptional ability and held in great esteem. He was, therefore, compelled to devote his immediate attention to this side. An army about ten thousand strong, well equipped and well supplied with arms, was ordered to proceed straight towards Gardez and take the Marshal and his men by surprise. Another was sent *via* Khushi

to march towards Jaji where Sardar Shah Mahmud Khan was busy in collecting a *lashkar*.

There was no time to be lost. The Bacha had at his disposal motor cars and lorries and Gardez was only a day's journey from Kabul. The Marshal left Shah Wali Khan in Gardez and himself at the head of his *lashkar* marched towards Logar. He had with him only two guns, four machine-guns and eleven boxes of cartridges. The first night he passed at Safed Qillah—the White Fort—at the entrance of the Tirah Pass. In the morning Zalmae Khan, at the head of his Mangali *lashkar*, left for Logar.

On the 24th of April at 9-30 in the morning the Marshal and his brother left for Charkh, a well-known place in Logar. He reached the top of the pass at about two in the afternoon. Here he was informed that some of the Bacha's men were encamped in Darvesh and more could be found in the suburbs of Bedak or Charkh. At about seven in the evening he reached Charkh. Mir Ghaus-ud-Din, the commander of the vanguard, on the pretext that he was not

on good terms with the people of Charkh had gone to another village, Dabar, to pass the night. The Marshal did not favour hasty action. He wanted first of all to inform the Bacha of the resolutions passed in the last *jirgah* where representatives from the Eastern Province also had taken part and secondly he wished in the meantime to see the chiefs of Logar and discuss the situation with them. Next morning all the elders of Charkh came to see him. The Marshal gave them a cordial reception and then made a speech enumerating the various calamities of the nation and explaining his object in coming to his motherland. Then the resolutions of the last *jirgah* were read out, and the elders unanimously agreed to carry them out to the letter, and in testimony thereof put their seals and signatures on the document. A copy of the resolutions passed at this meeting was sent through Turrah Baz Khan to Pinin Beg, the Bacha's commander at Darvesh.

The Battle.—At this time the Marshal got word from Mir Ghaus-ud-Din who was then at Dabar, about two miles ahead of the ***lashkar***, that the Bacha's men were on

him and that he was running short of ammunition. The Marshal was greatly annoyed to receive this news. He did not like fighting to commence so soon. He had sent a protest to the Bacha and his men and had so far received no reply. This behaviour of Mir Ghaus-ud-Din clearly showed that he was not to be relied upon. He had not put up at Charkh as desired by the Marshal, and had commenced fighting without waiting for orders from him. But the present situation left the Marshal no choice. He proceeded to Dabar to join in the fighting which lasted the whole day, and did not cease even at night. On the 26th April in the morning the Marshal himself entered the field of battle and began to fire from one of the guns at the enemy's forts. After a few well-aimed shots one of the forts was totally demolished. By midday the Saqaoists were everywhere repulsed, and all the important places had been occupied. But at noon the enemy got sufficient reinforcements, their artillery fire increased and they began to assume the offensive from many directions. For one hour they continued their advance, but after this there was a pause, and then

the *lashkar* made an assault and succeeded in re-occupying the lost places. Unfortunately they ran short of ammunition at this time. The demand was insistent and the Marshal was hard put to it to meet it. He managed at last to purchase a small quantity from the local people. Next morning there was a strong rumour that the Ahmadzai *lashkar* under Ghaus-ud-Din was dispersing in all directions and some of them had already crossed the Tirah Pass on the way to their respective homes. This treachery on the part of the Ahmadzai chief discouraged the *lashkar* very much. It began to retreat pell-mell in all directions. Some of the nomadic tribes who had been mere spectators of the scene now fell upon the retreating *lashkar*, slaying and looting whoever they could lay their hands upon. The Marshal did not lose heart. He tried to make a stand against the formidable hosts but in vain. He was almost deserted and with only a handful of men forced his way through the enemy, now in overwhelming majority. It was more by luck than anything else that he succeeded in reaching safely the Altamoor Pass, whence he proceeded to Sijinak.

Before leaving for Logar, the Marshal had sent word to general Shah Mahmud Khan in Jaji asking him to proceed *via* Dobandi and attack the enemy from the Khushi side. This was admirably carried out by the General. He succeeded in taking Khushi, where a large quantity of arms and ammunition, so badly needed, fell into his hands. From there he advanced on Zarghoon Shehr *via* Barg and Surkhab. After a few hours' fight, the Saqaoists were compelled to vacate the place and the General was planning an attack on the Wagha-Jan Pass at night, when he received the sad news that the Saqaoists had succeeded in taking Khushi and thus cutting off his retreat, and that the Marshal, owing to the treachery of Ghaus-ud-Din, had been obliged to retreat and was then at Sijinak. This was a very shocking news. The General saw that he was surrounded on all sides and even a retreat was well-nigh impossible. He became desperate and with a handful of men attacked the enemy at Khushi. But the *lashkar* was so disheartened that they had no desire to fight any longer; so the General was, like his brother,

obliged to fall back and it was after many hardships and forced marches that at last he succeeded in meeting the Marshal at Sijinak.

The Marshal was in no way dismayed or disheartened. Even at this time in spite of the discouraging rumours that all was lost, he kept his head. He would say, "I cannot lose heart by such ordinary repulses. I have determined to fight to the last. Even if there be nobody to help me, I, with my rifle, will continue single-handed to fight the enemy, with the idea of doing my duty and averting from my nation this catastrophe. Either I will achieve my object or lay down my life in the attempt to secure national peace and prosperity." Once more he invited the tribal chiefs to a *jirgah*, telling them that the repulse was not due to smaller numbers or military skill but to the treachery of Ghaus-ud-Din, who was secretly in the Bacha's pay; and that they should not think of giving up this fight for the noble cause of national deliverance, for he was sure success would crown their efforts in the long run.

CHAPTER XIII

PREPARATIONS—III

Sijinak.—The repulse at Charkh so much disheartened the tribal *lashkar* that the situation appeared desperate and hopeless. To make a fresh attack seemed impossible. Stories of the overwhelming strength of the enemy were circulating everywhere. Everyone was in a panic and disinclined to continue a losing fight. But the old veteran and his brave and faithful brothers were full of hope and courage. Marshal Mohammad Nadir Khan had foreseen that the usurper and his blood-thirsty followers were no match against an organized and united offensive from the south. The discomfited *lashkars* were encouraged to rally once more. They were made to understand the importance of a sustained effort and were also shown the dark future that awaited the nation in case of their delay in taking immediate and bold action. Their confidence was once more gained and they were prevailed upon to make a fresh attack. Every one vowed to expel

the usurper at all costs. Emissaries were despatched to all the southern tribes inviting their representatives to assemble in Sijinak to attend a *jirgah* on the 12th May. The response was encouraging. The *jirgah*, however, sat for several days without arriving at a definite decision. They were divided in opinion, some holding that renewal of hostilities would be heading for disaster. But on the last day of the *jirgah* the Marshal stood up to make his momentous and epoch-making speech. He depicted the horrors of the day and the untold miseries of the people who were starving and suffering at the hands of the bandits. He called upon the audience in stirring language to stand up for the national emancipation. Every one was moved, fresh enthusiasm was infused in them and they promised to do their best in raising a fresh *lashkar* for the common cause.

Mohammad Siddiq Commanding the Southern Division.—Due to his machinations and intrigues Mohammad Siddiq, as we have already observed, had been imprisoned. In the confusion that followed the discomfiture

at Charkh he made good his escape. He soon joined the Bacha and advised him to pursue the retreating *lashkar*, allowing it no time to rally again. The Bacha and his counsellors lost no time in turning this opportunity to their advantage. Mohammad Siddiq was at once put at the head of the Southern Division, 15,000 strong. The army proceeded at a rapid pace towards Gardez. Passing the Altamoor they soon occupied the White Fort facing Gardez, thus gaining an important strategic position. Mohammad Siddiq was himself a trained and experienced soldier. When the revolution broke out, he was at Gardez where he had been in command of the southern force for the last five years. He knew all the southern tribes very well. He was not ignorant of their military skill, but he was also aware of their weak points, of their tribal jealousies and long-standing enmities, which he wanted to use to his advantage. He tried to find friends and allies amongst them, and his efforts in that direction were to a large extent fruitful. The Sulaiman Khels and the Dari Khels promised him full support.

One of his hirelings, Faqir Mohammad, had the courage to enter the village of Milan, twelve miles from Sijinak, and try to win over the chiefs whom he knew to be out and out anti-Saqaoists. Emboldened by his initial successes Mohammad Siddiq went so far as to despatch personal letters to the chiefs of the *lashkar*, stationed at Sijinak, promising them handsome rewards as the price of treachery to the Marshal. One such letter was received by Zalmae Khan, the influential chief of the Mangals, which he at once submitted to the Marshal.

Bacha's Message.—In order to know the real strength of the *lashkar* and to understand the political situation of the south, after the victory of Charkh, the Bacha sent a letter to the Marshal, through one of his newly-made favourites, Abdul Latif, a native of Kohat, who had settled in Afghanistan following the Hijrat movement. (A treacherous fortune-hunter, Abdul Latif could never sit peacefully anywhere and even in Afghanistan meddled in politics. He had been banished to Kataghan, where he had lived till the revolution. When the capital

fell into the hands of the Bacha, he came to Kabul and entered the service of the bandit. He soon gained the Bacha's confidence and became one of his favourites.) The contents of the letter were interesting indeed. The Marshal was asked to give up the fight and to send his allegiance. He was promised in return any post that he would like to have, and the full benefits of his property. Failing this, it was threatened that all the members of his family, sixty-one in number, who were then in Kabul, would be at once put to death. Besides this, Abdul Latif also brought the message, that if the Marshal had any ambition for the throne, the Bacha agreed to decide the matter by drawing lots on the Marshal's arrival at Kabul. The Marshal in the presence of all read out the letter, and the audience could not help bursting into laughter, specially at the strange concession that the Bacha was ready to offer. The Marshal's reply was in the following terms:—

To, Habibullah, the son of a water-carrier,

I got your message and the offer it

contained. It seems to me that so far you are quite ignorant of my purpose and intention, and that your counsellors too have misguided you in this respect. My object in returning to my motherland at such a time is neither to have the throne, nor to share it with you. I have come here simply to do away with internal unrest, and put an end to this bloody civil war, which is corroding the foundation of the nation. This national catastrophe has been brought about by you. Although due to your ignorance you do not realize the damage you have done to the nation, yet the sensible world lays all the blame at your door, and the day of reckoning is not far. Myself and my companions wish to see Afghanistan enjoying peace and prosperity, and on the path of progress. This is my goal and whosoever crosses my path, I would look upon him as a national enemy and would do my best to remove him from my way.

A few days ago I sent you a message duly signed by the representatives of the east and the south. It was clearly pointed out to you that so long as you held the

reins of the Government, it was impossible to see peace in the country. You were, therefore, called upon to retire. You had the audacity to refuse. Even now I am willing to give you a chance, for I have come for peace, and have no desire to shed blood. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to restore peace in the country, without recourse to arms. But I am sure that so long as an ignorant person like you remains on the throne, the nation cannot enjoy peace or happiness. You are not fit for the responsibility that you have assumed, and no one is willing to accept you as king. I, therefore, once more advise you to vacate the throne and to let the people have a king of their own choice. If, however, you are obstinate and crazy about the throne, you will be only aggravating the existing troubles of the country, and I will be compelled to fight you to the last. I am going to hold a second *jirgah* in the course of a day or two and the decision arrived at will be communicated to you at once.

Regarding your threats to kill my relatives who are now in Kabul, in case I refuse to

accept your sovereignty, let me tell you frankly that you again misjudge me. If in the cause of national welfare I were to lose all my relatives or even myself, I will feel proud of such a noble sacrifice. Remember, O tyrant! that these threats cannot deter me from my determination.

. . . . . .

On the 17th May, the tribal representatives assembled again. All the tribes promised to send in their levies after a month as they were at the time busy cultivating their lands. But the Marshal could not wait, as Mohammad Siddiq was already on his way to Gardez. Something had to be done to check his advance. He, therefore, sent necessary instructions to Sardar Shah Wali Khan, who was then in charge of the Gardez garrison, and promised to send him help soon. Sardar Shah Mahmud Khan moved towards Jaji in order to divert the Bacha's attention. It was at a critical time like this that the Bacha sent another message to the Marshal through Sardar Ali Shah Khan and the notorious Abdul Latif. Ali Shah Khan, a cousin of the Marshal, did not hesitate to tell the truth and related the manifold atrocities of the Bacha

and his men in the presence of a full audience including Abdul Latif. He told the Marshal that although all their relatives in Kabul might perish at the hands of the tyrant yet this should in no way affect his programme. He added that they would all prefer death to an ignominious agreement, detrimental to the general welfare. The Marshal had once more to repeat his previous message, which enraged the brigand ruler to such an extent that all the members of his family were thrown into dungeons.

Attack on Gardez.—Mohammad Siddiq, realizing the weakness of the Gardez garrison, advanced rapidly. Before beginning bombardment, he gave the garrison the choice of unconditional surrender by 3 P.M. The few men who were inside the fort were in no way prepared to meet the onslaught of this formidable host. Sardar Shah Wali Khan was at his wit's end. He knew that there was no time to lose, the enemy was already knocking at the door. He held a hurried meeting to discuss the problem, but few agreed to fight. All hope was lost, when suddenly Abdul Ghani Khan, a brave

and energetic man, got up and made a short speech, telling them that he would in no case submit to the Bacha whose very name was a national disgrace, the blackest spot on the history of the Afghans. He said that he was determined to fight to the last, and if none joined him, he would face the enemy single-handed. Saying this he took up his rifle and left for the front. His brave words and bold example worked a miracle. He was at once followed by sixty men. The overwhelming host of the invaders now began to press on all sides, but these sixty men put up a heroic fight. Much blood was shed and the defenders in spite of heavy losses held on. They were hourly reinforced but at no time did their number exceed six hundred. At this critical time, the Ahmadzai *lashkar* arrived to the rescue of the beseiged. Fortunately, a cavalry of Totakhels and Mangals of Mirzaka sent by the Marshal appeared on the scene. The tables were now turned and the Saqaoists were dispersed. At nine in the evening the rout was complete. The enemy could not keep themselves even in the White Fort and had to cross the Altamoor

Pass. Large quantities of ammunition and hundreds of prisoners fell into the hands of the victorious *lashkar*. Mohammad Siddiq, the commander, who was severely wounded in the thigh, managed to escape. He, with four hundred men, took shelter in Sahak—six miles from Gardez.

The victory was complete; but the danger was not yet over. When the Marshal learnt of the outcome, he, apprenhensive as he was of a counter-attack from Kabul, sent about eighty men to watch the Altamoor Pass and a message was sent to Jaji asking Sardar Shah Mahmud Khan, either to attack Logar pesonally *via* Dobandi or to send a detachment there with necessary instructions and come to Sijinak himself. As foreseen, the Bacha, on hearing of the plight of his army, collected a large force immediately, and himself at its head, marched towards Gardez. It was in the Altamoor Pass that he was fired at by the eighty men already stationed there as a precautionary measure. The neighbouring tribes also came to their help, and the Bacha soon found himself hemmed in. It was with great difficulty that he managed to reach

Kabul in his car. Once more large quantities of arms and ammunition fell into the hands of the *lashkar*.

Sardar Shah Wali Khan held a *jirgah* at Gardez in order to discuss the immediate line of action. Some were in favour of an attack on Kabul *via* Logar; others suggested that so long as Mohammad Siddiq was at Sahak, such a step could not be taken without danger. They proposed to send an ultimatum to the Sahak tribes asking them to hand over the Saqaoist general or to turn him out. To this the Sardar would not agree; he knew it was rather dangerous to send such a message. This would make these and the other local tribes take up arms against him. But very much against his wishes he was obliged to comply with their request. The Sahakis on receiving the message bluntly refused either to hand over Mohammad Siddiq and his men or to turn them out. A battle was now unavoidable. Both parties made preparations and soon afterwards the battle commenced. At first the Sahaki *lashkar* was beaten back and they were willing to sign an agreement, and to turn out the Saqaoists. But as ill-luck

would have it, just at this time they got reinforcements from Kabul and the Sulaiman Khel tribes and immediately assumed the offensive. Gardez was soon in danger and the inhabitants began to vacate, flying for shelter to the far off villages. Sardar Shah Wali Khan held out till the end. He sent a touching letter to the Marshal telling him that he would soon be obliged to bid good-bye to the Gardez Fort. He was already surrounded by foes on all sides, but even so he did not leave the fort till its residents who had so faithfully stood by him were carried to safety.

His Majesty King Mohd Nadir Shah
with H.R.H. Prince Mohd Zahir Khan.

CHAPTER XIV

The Fall of Kabul

With the disastrous fate of Gardez due mainly to the unwise and rash actions of the tribes and their mutual discord, the greatest stronghold of the south was lost. The Bacha was now in possession of nearly the whole country. Very little hope was left. From Gardez, the heart of the province, the Bacha could easily extend his tentacles in all directions. He would have no difficulty in establishing direct contact with the tribes. He would first try to bribe them and if that device proved useless he could use force, and would have little difficulty in bringing them to their knees.

The Marshal, however, contrary to the apprehensions of everybody, was still hopeful of success. With the remaining few men, he repaired to Jaji, where Sardar Shah Mahmud Khan was busy in collecting a *lashkar*. The journey lay through a very wild and desolate tract of land. It took the Marshal full two days to reach his

destination. During these days he could hardly take any rest. Once only on the way, at a place called Hazar Darakht, "One Thousand Trees", he stopped to take food. The elders of Jaji had come out to receive him at Shiga, where he was given a cordial reception. Great rejoicings with tribal dances and beating of drums soon made them forget the hardships of the journey.

Immediately a meeting was held. The Marshal was the first to speak and explain the causes that brought him to Jaji. He briefly dealt with the situation of the day, his aims and objects and the causes of the fall of Gardez. In the end he asked them to give up internal discord and work unitedly otherwise there was no hope of national salvation. Then one of the chiefs, representing the tribes, made a speech. He said, "All the Jaji tribes are extremely thankful for all the troubles that you have undergone for the sake of this country and appreciate very much your past services to the nation. They express their deep sorrow on the behaviour of some of the tribes who, due to their ignorance, failed to realize the true

value of your sacrifices. We consider ourselves fortunate to see you amongst us. This is the happiest day of our life and we will never fail to commemorate the anniversary of this day. We promise to abide by your orders and carry out your commands. Our *lashkar* is quite prepared and only awaits your instructions. We wish that under your guidance we may be able to rescue the nation." The Marshal thanked them for their sincere wishes and said that he was not in favour of hsaty steps. He would first try to bring about, the union of the various tribes, for in his opinion that was more important at the time than bringing about the fall of the usurper, and unless that was brought about, there could not be any permanent peace in the country, and all their efforts would be frustrated. He, therefore, asked them to do their best to unite the various tribes at war with one another. He suggested that missions be sent to them explaining the urgent need of giving up their tribal jealousies and of making a united effort for the extirpation of the cruel regime, and the restoration of peace.

Consequently two missions were sent, one to Gardez and the other to the Eastern Province. A *lashkar* of some 2,500 Jajis under the command of Sardar Shah Mahmud Khan was sent to watch the Dobandi Pass, leading to Logar and to try to win over some of the local chiefs to their side. On the 30th June, the two missions left for their respective destinations. During this interval the Marshal kept himself busy with propaganda work. A cyclostyle was procured and a weekly paper *Islah*—the Reformation—was published which in the course of a few weeks began to prove very useful.

The mission sent to Gardez met the representatives of the tribes in the village of Totakhel. The tribes repented of their past behaviour, their selfishness and rash actions. They expressed their deepest sorrow on the departure of the Marshal and his brothers. They entered into a solemn contract promising to give up their mutual jealousies and rivalries and exert themselves under the guidance of the Marshal.

The General Condition of the Country at this Time.—Kabul, the seat of government,

for the last eight months had been groaning under various oppressive measures. The nobles and the high officials were either shot dead or were suffering tortures in dungeons and prisons. Most of the people were unemployed and did not know how to procure their daily bread. Shops were generally closed and trade was at a standstill. Afghanistan was entirely cut off from the outside world. The Bacha and his men thinking themselves now masters of the country with none to dispute their rights had increased their atrocities. Independence Day arrived and was celebrated at Deh Mozang near Kabul with great ceremony and rejoicing.

Kandahar had submitted to the Bacha and was governed by one Abdul Qadeer. Abdul Latif, the notorious Kohati and the messenger of Bacha, was in charge of the Police Department. The whole of the Kandahar Province was now part of Bacha's dominion. But the Kandaharis had by this time realized their folly. During the days of King Amanullah Khan they wanted a change of Government; but the change, when achieved,

proved to be for the worse. Some of the pamphlets and a few copies of the *Islah* found their way to Kandahar and had a salutary effect in rousing the people. One of the Achakzai leaders, Mehr Dil Khan, was strenuously exerting himself to shake off Bacha's yoke. Gradually he won a large number of adherents from amongst the tribes and the Bacha's military posts were taken and the garrison massacred. Feeling the general weakness of the Bacha's Government and the universal hatred of the people for him, he determined to march on Kandahar.

In the north the Bacha was very successful. His agents Mohammad Qasim Khan and Abdur Rahim Khan took the whole province without having an army at their command. Such was the general hatred of the people for the ex-King and his officials that the soldiers everywhere mutinied, killed their officers and sent their allegiance to the Bacha. Abdul Aziz Khan, the Governor of Mazar-i-Sharif, had to flee for his life. But soon the tables were turned. Ghulam Nabi Khan, a brother of Abdul Aziz Khan, with a handful of Turkomans

and other Muslim tribes of Central Asia swooped down upon the country from the north and within a few days was able to take Mazar-i-Sharif and other important places as far as the Hindu Kush. Even Sayed Hussain who was sent to oppose his advance had to take shelter in Qataghan. But at this time Ghulam Nabi Khan heard of the flight of the ex-King, and was so disappointed that he at once made up his mind to give up the struggle. Collecting everything that he could lay his hands on, he repaired secretly to Russia, leaving the north once more to the mercy of Sayed Hussain, who did not fail to avenge his past grievances. The whole of the north from the Zulfiqar Pass in the west right up to Sar-i-Kul in the east was now in the grip of the Bacha and his men.

In the east, Sardar Mohammad Hashim Khan was going from place to place asking the tribes to give up their internecine warfare. He had been able to restore order and to form a temporary Government whose seat was at Kajja. At last he collected a small *lashkar.* It was sent to attack

Kabul from the east simultaneously with the attack of the *lashkar* from the south. But unfortunately the southern *lashkar* had to fall back and the Bacha had time to control the situation; and the eastern expedition failed to do anything. The Bacha was at this time at the zenith of his power. He was now the master of the whole country. Even Gardez, the strongest military post of the south, was in his possession. Yet he could not feel at ease. The Marshal with his brothers was still in Jaji busy with his work in uniting the tribes and organizing a *lashkar*. The Bacha managed to collect a large army, about 50,000 strong, with the intention of attacking Jaji from different points. But before he was able to embark on his expedition at the head of this formidable force, the Marshal thought of a plan of dividing his forces. Sardar Shah Mahmud Khan commenced his advance on Gardez, thus keeping busy the Bacha's garrison there. The enemy was obliged tc station an army of about 10,000 at Karez-i-Darvesh on the Kabul-Gardez Road.

In the east Sardar Mohammad Hashim

Khan was asked to prepare another *lashkar* and to threaten the Bacha's eastern flank, with the result that the Bacha had to send a large portion of his army to the east. Hamidullah, Bacha's younger brother, was made the commander of this section. After a short resistance, Sardar Mohammad Hashim Khan began to retreat and the enemy thinking themselves victorious made a hot pursuit. But their difficulties increased daily. Every day brought new troubles. If one tribe was subjugated, another in a different quarter would rise and more reinforcements had to be sent from the capital.

The Marshal, on the other hand, watched the course of events very carefully. He also made preparations on a larger scale. Invitations were sent to some trans-border Afghan tribes. The Orakzais were the first to respond. But as their way lay through British territory, they could not come to Jaji without the consent of that Government. H. Mohammad Akbar Khan was sent to consult the Political Officer at Parachinar. But the Government of India declaring its strict neutrality refused passage. The

Waziris were next approached. A mission consisting of Allah Nawaz Khan, Nawab Khan, Jan Gul Khan and Abdul Rahim Khan left Ali Khel on the 5th August. Meanwhile, the Marshal collected stores of provisions at different places for the expected *lashkar* and at the same time worked busily with the cyclostyle. Soon *lashkars* from all sides began to pour in Ali Khel. The Chamkani *lashkar* under the command of General Shah Mahmud Khan left for Mirzaka. This journey took him three days. On reaching the place, the General began to win over the local tribes to his side, with a view to attack Gardez. The Ahmadzais and Totakhels sent in their men. The Saqaoists, annoyed to see such a state of affairs so close to Gardez, fell upon them, but after a contested fight of two days, took to their heels. They were closely pursued by the *lashkar*. But due to rapid artillery fire and the strong position of the fort, Gardez could not be taken. The next day, the Saqaoists were greatly reinforced. They once more came out to meet the *lashkar* in the open field. A fight took place

in the suburbs of Tor and Speen, and lasted for two days. Both sides suffered heavy casualties. The Saqaoists were again beaten, leaving a large number of prisoners, and plenty of arms and ammunition.

The Dash for the Capital.—At this juncture the Waziri *lashkar* arrived, and the Marshal thought of making a dash for the capital from a direction which the Bacha could have little imagined. Sardar Shah Wali Khan was ordered to proceed *via* Dobandi to the Logar Valley. He commenced his memorable march on the 29th September. His first objective was the post of Khushi, which he had little difficulty in occupying. From this place as his headquarters he sent a detachment of some 1,000 men to attack the Wagho-Jan Pass—the key to Kabul. In the evening the *lashkar* reached the pass, and attacked the enemy. The battle lasted all through the night, and when the dawn broke, the Saqaoists found themselves surrounded, and had to yield. Besides prisoners, a large quantity of arms and ammunition fell into the hands of the victors. The *lashkar* returned to Khushi with the

booty. The Sardar was highly pleased to learn of their success but immediately sent another batch to guard the pass, which had, however, been reoccupied by the enemy in the interval. A second fight had to be fought. At the same time another *lashkar* under Allah Nawaz Khan was sent to attack the Saqaoists at Mohammad Agha. The place was stormed; large quantity of arms and ammunition were taken. Another detachment proceeded to the help of those who were fighting for Wagho-Jan Pass, and attacked the enemy from the other side. The Saqaoists lost heart and dispersed. The pass was occupied and a guard posted there.

For the last forty-eight hours since the commencement of the battle, the Sardar had no rest. He was busy in sending men, ammunition and provisions wherever needed. But he was hopeful of his success as he was aware of the growing hatred of the people for the Bacha and his reign, and the demoralized condition of his army. Kabul was 20 miles to the north—a distance of five hours' march. He knew it was the right time to strike. After his initial

successes at Mohammad Agha, Allah Nawaz Khan was ordered to proceed towards Char Asia, which he occupied the next day, and he was soon joined by the Sardar with all his men. The Sardar now divided his *lashkar* into two parts. One batch under Allah Nawaz Khan and Mohammad Gul Khan was ordered to proceed *via* Sang-i-Navishta and Bini Hisar and he himself at the head of the other division advanced on Kabul by way of Char-Deh. He had no difficulty in reaching Chehl-Stoon, about two miles to the south of Kabul. All the points of strategic importance near Kabul were taken. The Bacha in the meantime was not idle. He fortified the Asmai, Sher Darwaza and the Maranjan Hills, commanding the Arg and the city of Kabul; and all the members of the Marshal's family were taken to the Arg and put into dungeons.

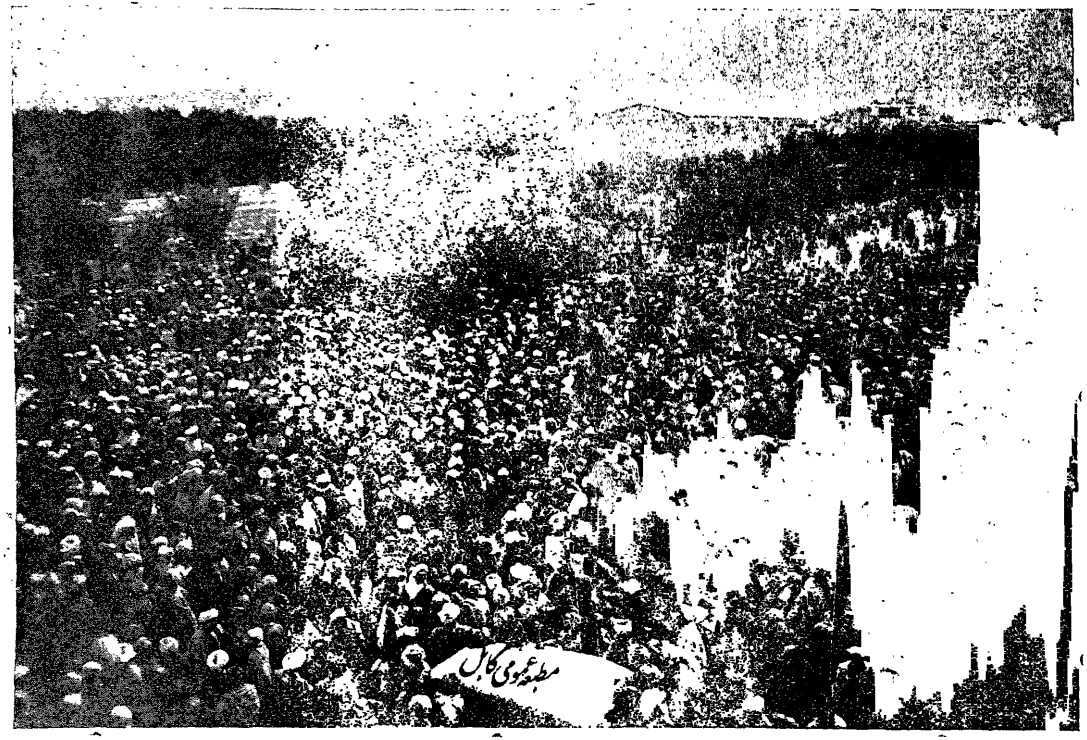
The Night of Suspense.—The panic-stricken and famished people of the capital were too excited to sleep that night. Impatiently they peered into the darkness, intently listening for the first sounds of the invading army's approach; the consternation of the Bacha and his men adding to their secret joy.

The Dawn of Hope.—The day dawned and the *lashkar* from the Bini Hisar began to advance. The Bacha himself went to Maranjan Hill and offered resistance. Thrice the *lashkar* attempted to enter the city but each time the heavy artillery fire from the enemy compelled them to retreat. The following night the *lashkar* again made an attempt and after a few hours' fighting succeeded in breaking their lines and reached the Chaman-i-Hazoori, the playgrounds on the outskirts of the city. At the same time Sardar Shah Wali Khan also entered the city in the face of heavy artillery fire (October 9th, 1929). The Saqaoists were beaten at every point and most of them left for Koh Daman, while a few took shelter in the Arg where the Bacha was making his last stand. There was general rejoicing in the city. The Bacha's officials decamped and the Sardar had no difficulty in restoring order and peace. Everywhere the citizens came out to meet him, and congratulated him on his success. Bands were played, drums beaten and songs sung in his honour. But the Sardar knew that

the danger was not yet over. The most critical time had yet to come. The Bacha with his chosen adherents was inside the Arg, and all the members of the Marshal's family were kept there to be put to death as soon as the Arg was bombarded. The Bacha sent word that each bullet fired in that direction would find one of his relatives as its victim. Sardar Shah Wali Khan had to communicate with the Marshal on this point. In the evening, Purdil, the Bacha's Commander-in-Chief with all the men at his command, attacked the city from the Paghman side. Sardar Shah Wali Khan and General Shah Mahmud Khan with a handful of men went out to meet him. Near Shehr Ara, the old Habibia College building, a decisive battle was fought, and fortune once more favoured the heroes; Purdil himself was mortally wounded.

On the 11th October, the Sardar received a reply to his letter sent to the Marshal. This letter showed how the Marshal was ready to make the heaviest sacrifice for the sake of his motherland. He ordered his brother to commence bombardment immediately.

The letter ran thus :—"At this crisis when the choice lies between the safety of my relatives and the safety of the nation, I do not hesitate to sacrifice the former. I, therefore, command you to begin bombardment of the Arg immediately without the slightest consideration for our dear ones." The Sardar on receiving the order did not flinch for a moment. With tears in his eyes, he began to bombard the Arg. During the night a fruitless assault was made, for the artillery fire of the enemy held them back. Next day the bombardment was resumed. The magazine inside the castle caught fire. The garrison soon lost heart. Even the Bacha realized that his days were numbered. Under cover of darkness he made good his escape. The *lashkar* now entered the burning Arg and were relieved to find all the members of the Marshal's family safe. But the major portion of the beautiful Arg was burnt to ashes. The news of this success was at once communicated to the Marshal in Ali Khel. People from all parts of the country flocked to the capital. On the 16th October, the Marshal reached Chehl Stoon and at 10 the



Reception of Marshal Mohd Nadir Khan in Kabul.

The Marshal in the Salamkhana, Kabul.

next morning he entered the city. Thousands of the people of all tribes stood on either side of the road to greet him. He was received with the shouts of " Long live the Saviour of the Nation."

The Marshal proceeded straight to the Salam Khana—the Hall of Reception. Representatives from every part of the country had gathered there. One of them got up and thanked the Marshal and his brothers for their innumerable services. The Marshal made a brief speech, telling them that they should realize the national losses and do their best to recoup them. All the representatives earnestly implored the Marshal to accept the throne, but the Marshal was unwilling to go so far. He said that his aim had been achieved and his duty was done. He wanted to return to private life at Aliabad—two miles from Kabul. But the people who had realized the true worth of the Marshal would on no account leave him. His remonstrances were in vain. He was their saviour and so he must be their king. The hall resounded with the repeated shouts of " Long live King Mohammad Nadir Shah."

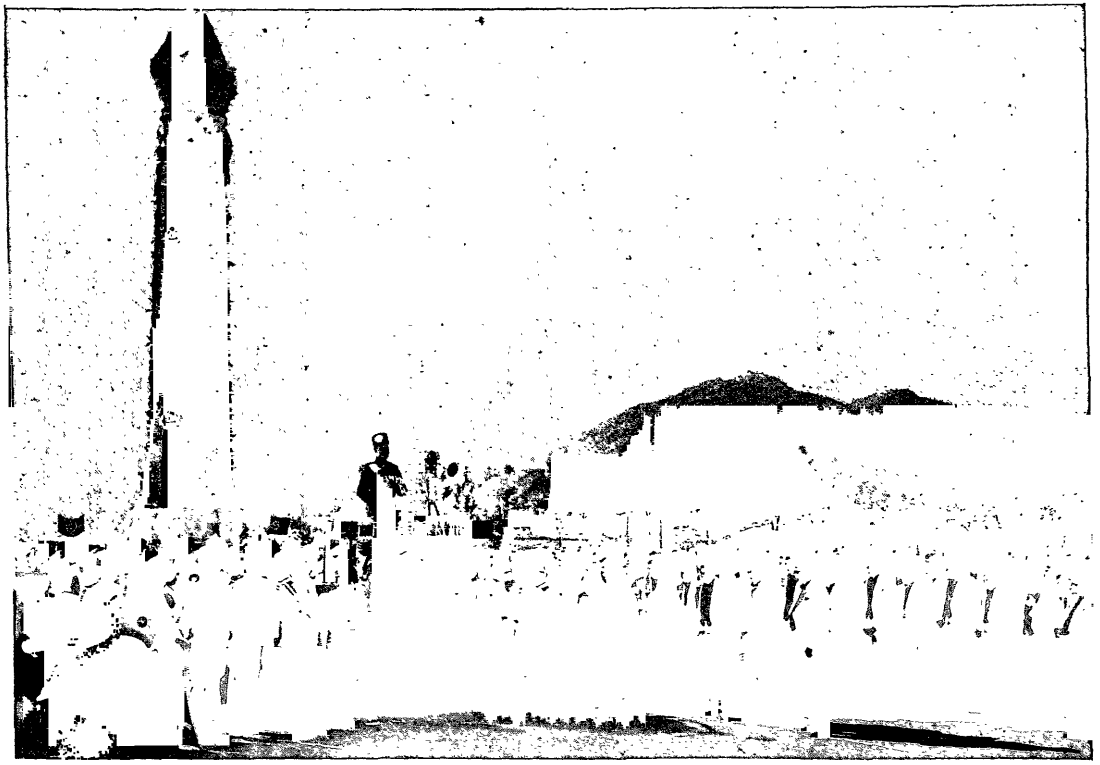
The Marshal wanted to speak but for a long time he was given no opportunity to do so. At last when the enthusiasm abated a little the Marshal stood up. To an audience that was respectfully hushed, he addressed these words, "Gentlemen," he said, "my object was only to free you from the cruel hold of the Bacha and to put an end to the Reign of Terror, and this by the grace of God and by your co-operation has been achieved. Now, I hope, you will kindly permit me to retire and take rest. It is for you now to choose a king. Let your choice fall on some worthy person who is in your opinion fit for this task. As for myself, to tell you the truth, I am not in a position, nor am I willing, to take up this onerous duty. Long ere this I made my aims and objects clear to you." On this the chiefs were all the more clamorous in their demand. All of them with one voice declared that no one was worthier to be their king; and that his refusal would plunge the country into worse troubles. In the name of the love and honour of the country, that was so dear to him, they requested the Marshal to accept.

Taking advantage of the Marshal's hesitation the people again shouted, "Long live King Mohammad Nadir Shah, the Saviour of the Afghans and the Liberator of the country." Although aware of the poor condition of the country and the heavy task that lay before the Government, the Marshal was so much pressed that he had to yield. The audience were overjoyed to hear his acceptance and for a long time the hall rang with shouts of :—

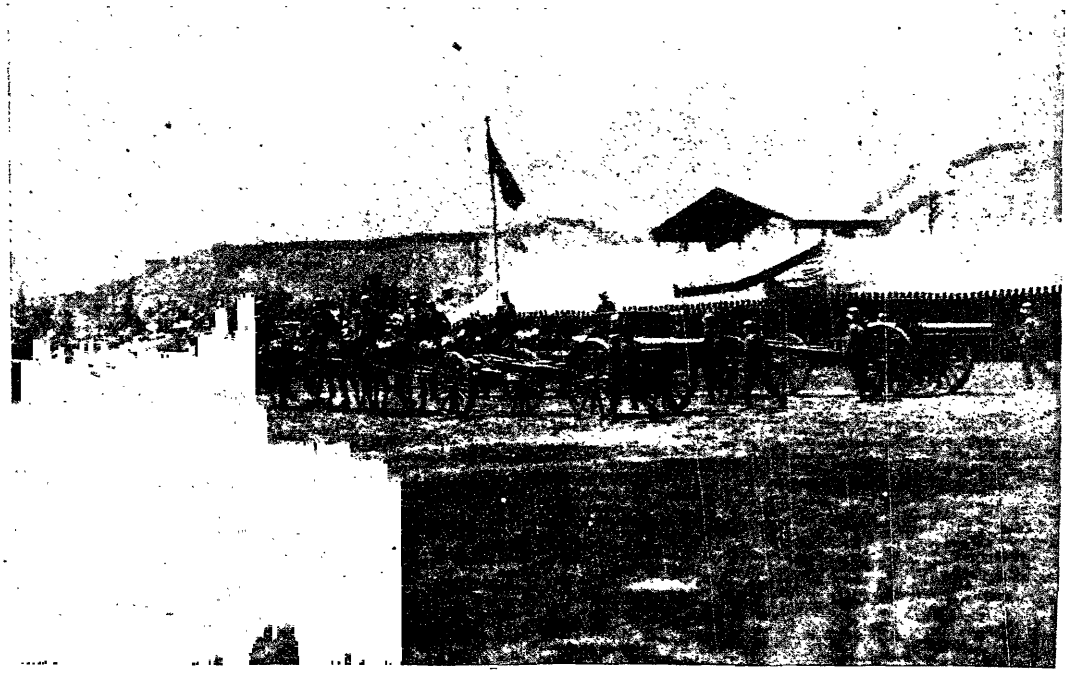
"Long live King Mohammad Nadir Shah"

"Long live the Saviour of the Nation"

"Long live the Independence of the Country."



Opening ceremony of the Nijat-i-Watan Celebrations, 1932.



Afghan Artillery

CHAPTER XV

RECONSTRUCTION

It is not by his military genius and his crowning achievement in saving his country from the iron grip of the cruel and relentless tyrant or by his innumerable national services in the past alone that we should estimate the greatness of this august personality. As later events have shown, this sovereign of the Afghans deserves our esteem and commands our admiration from another point of view also, *viz.* as a brilliant administrator and a highly talented organizer. To appreciate to the fullest extent the wonderful achievements of His Majesty, it is necessary to compare the state of affairs on the day when he was obliged to assume the responsibilities of Government with the situation to-day. At the age of 45, he embarked on a task that might have daunted the bravest and wisest of diplomats. In the history of no other nation do we find a sovereign so financially handicapped at the start. It was probably the first case

of a national exchequer being absolutely bankrupt, unlined with even a silver coin. The finances of the state, therefore, demanded the first and the most vigilant care of the King. Though every measure of injustice and extortion, which could bring the last farthing of his subjects into the coffers of the state, had been adopted by the Bacha, yet upon his explusion from the Arg, the public treasury was totally exhausted, so much so that King Mohammad Nadir Shah had no means to defray even the current expenses of the Government. It was literally the case of a monarch ruling at Kabul without possessing so much as even the price of a meal for himself. Even under these distressed and difficult circumstances he had the magnanimity to remit all the oppressive rates and taxes which had told so heavily upon the poor classes and also to cancel the arrears due from people and forego the unjust claims of the treasury, declaring in a royal decree that he was better satisfied to govern and administer a poor country with justice and equity than to acquire riches by means of tyranny and

oppression. Economy and industry he considers as the true sources of wealth. The expenses of the royal household were immediately reduced to a minimum, that is, to less than one-fourth of the budgets of the previous kings. All the estates, that had been considered the property of the crown and whose revenue went directly to the king's purse, were declared to be public property. The royal firman to the effect reads thus :—

To,

The Minister of Finance.

WHEREAS according to information received, the royal private property of Afghanistan is not personal in the real sense of the word, in other words, the private property has been so altered that from the beginning uptil now a great deal has every now and then been taken from the public treasury and added to it; and as it stands to-day, the area of lands, the number of shops and factories, etc., requires for its correct upkeep an office as big as the Ministry of Finance, and the whole affair has assumed

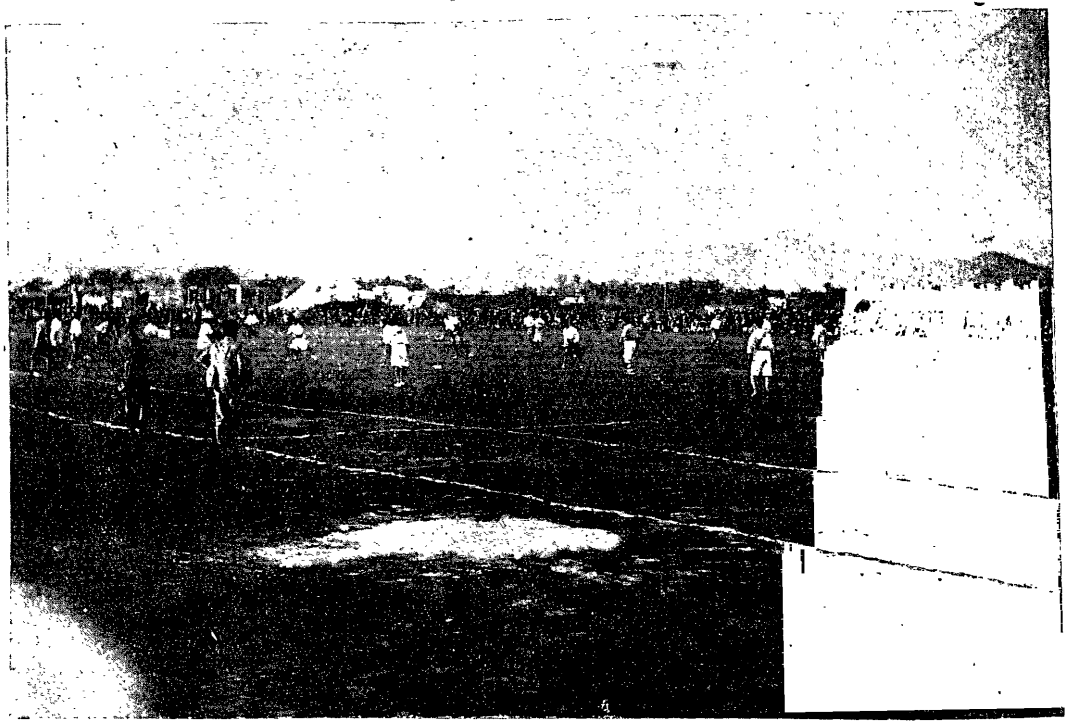
such an intricate form that it is impossible to distinguish the real property from that added afterwards. We, therefore, considering all such properties as rightly belonging to the public treasury, ordain that all such lands, shops, etc., which now are included in the private royal assets be transferred to the public treasury of the nation and the office relative to the private property be abolished.

(Sd.) H. M. THE KING.

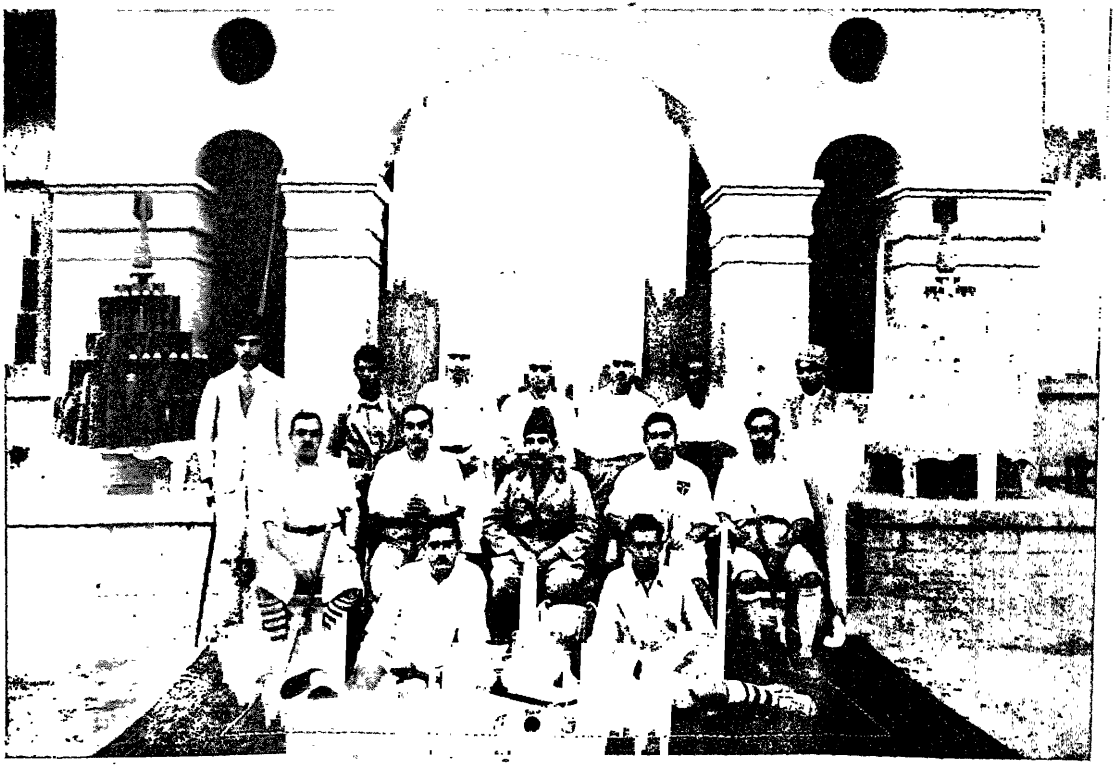
2 Aqrab 1308.

(25th October 1929).

In addition to this frugality and the reduction of the expenses of the royal household, the King had the generosity to issue another firman granting liberal stipends to the brothers and relatives of the ex-King. Another noteworthy proclamation of the King known as the Khat-i-Mashi deals with the future programme of his Government. The previous kings of the country did not work under any definite programme; one day one thing was done, and the next day another; and the will of the king could undo either. There was no goal or aim to be achieved.



Hockey Match, Military Club v. British Legation. Independence Day, 1932.



Hockey Winners, Independence Day Celebrations, 1932
H.R.H. Sardar Shah Mahmud Khan, Minister for Defence (centre) takes a keen interest in all sports.

But King Mohammad Nadir Shah on the very day of his coronation issued a proclamation which contained briefly his aims and objects, and the line he proposed for the conduct of the Government. This firman is the foundation-stone of a constitution for the country. It runs thus :—

(1) —The present Government shall direct and conduct the affairs of state in strict accordance with the tenets of the holy and sacred religion of Islam, according to the Hanafi School; and the Shoora-i-Milli (The Afghan Parliament) and Ministry of Justice shall be responsible for the enforcement of Islamic Law in the country. The department of Ihtsab shall be an essential feature of the Government, and shall be conducted in a systematic way in accordance with the articles of faith. The inhabitants of Afghanistan shall without distinction of race or creed have equal rights and shall be as brothers to one another. Purdah

shall be observed in accordance with the Islamic Law.

(2) *Prohibition of Bribery and Intoxicants.*—All the employees of whatever grade or rank shall, in the Ministry of Justice, swear by the Holy Koran and promise that they will not accept bribes or presents from the people and shall conduct themselves in the discharge of their duties with clean minds; and from now onwards shall never give way to dishonesty, but will carry out their duties honestly and sincerely. Punishment for drinking shall be according to the Islamic Law. Sale of liquor, public or private, is prohibited in the whole country, and the inhabitants are not allowed to brew liquors. If liquors are manufactured in any house, or offered for sale in any shop and this fact be proved to a certainty, the articles used for the purpose shall be confiscated and the persons

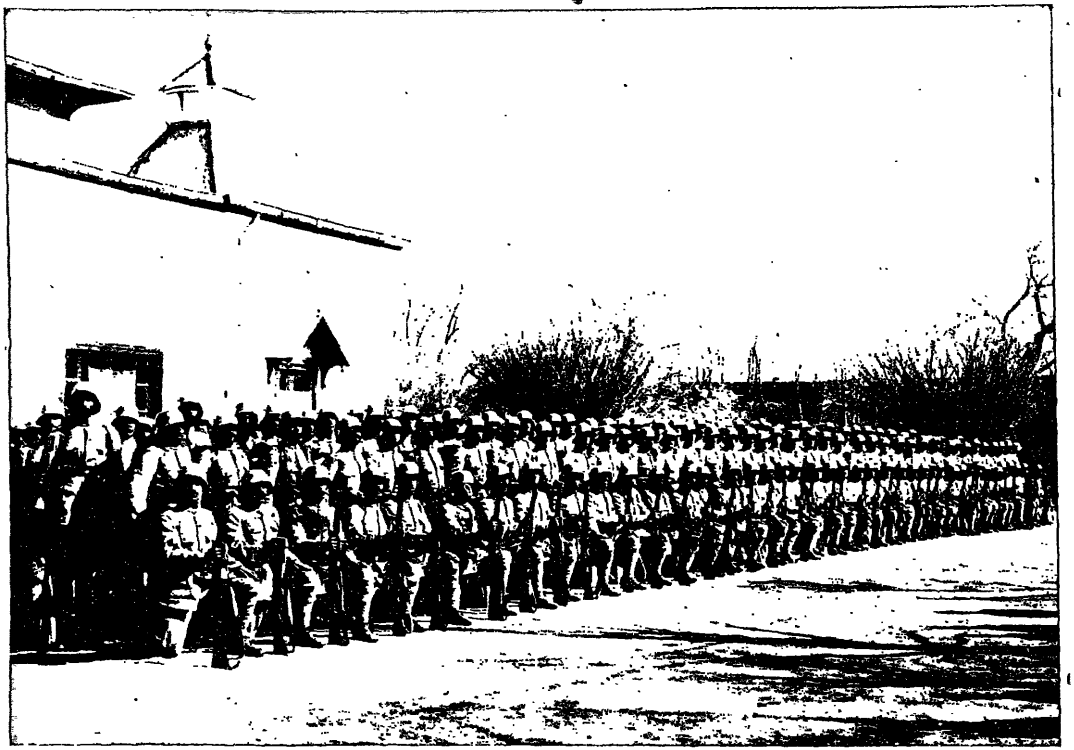
concerned shall be punished as required by the Islamic Law. If any employee of the Government be found drinking, he shall, in addition to receiving the legal punishment, be dismissed from his post. This rule, however, does not apply to foreigners.

(3) *Military Affairs.*—For the maintenance of the Independence of the country and peace and order therein, the present Government desires to organize a regular armed force and to give its full attention to this matter which is a question of life and death for the country. And in order to educate the officers and give them knowledge and use of the military weapons and chemicals, a military college will be started as soon as possible. Conscription and voluntary recruitment shall be introduced.

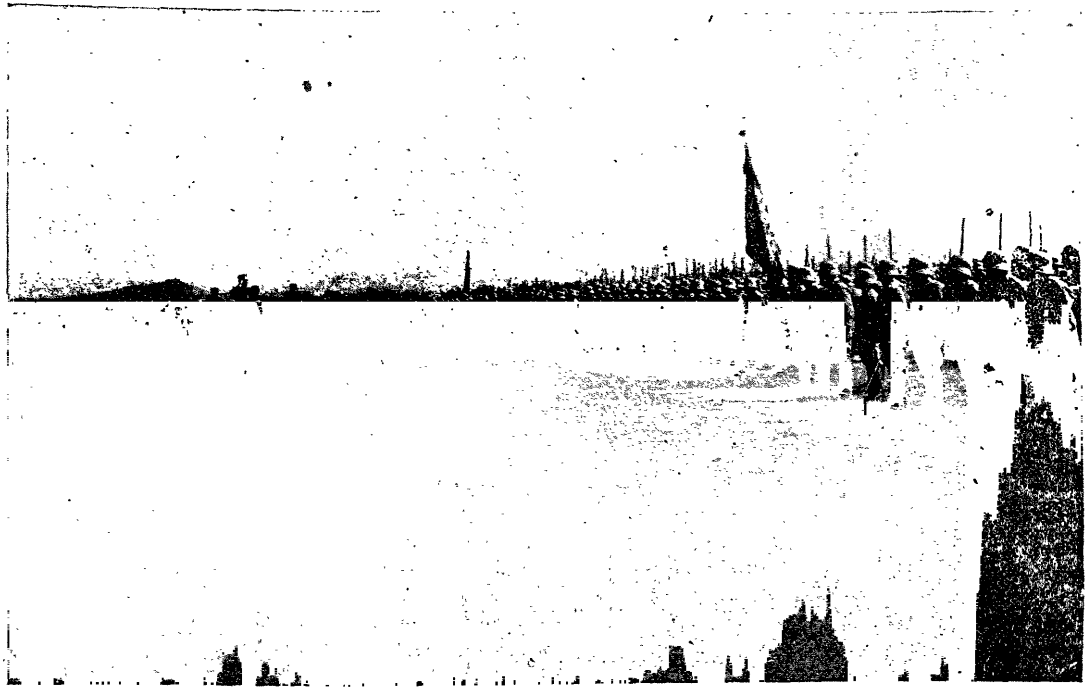
(4) *Foreign Relations.*—Afghanistan shall maintain its relations with

foreign countries as they were in the reign of H. M. King Amanullah Khan. The present Government wishes to establish relations of goodwill with adjacent countries and is prepared to make treaties of friendship in order to maintain and strengthen the Independence of the country.

(5) *Home affairs.*—The Home Ministry shall devote its full attention to the appointment of governors and subordinates for the various provinces and districts, so that the work of Government may be entrusted to suitable hands. It shall present a list of candidates before a selection committee for approval and sanction. It shall also try to make satisfactory telephone, telegraph and postal arrangements and shall give early attention to the construction of bridges and roads for motors and other vehicles.



An Afghan Regiment.



A. Military Review by H. M. King Mohd Nadir Shah.

(6) *The Ministry of Finance.*—The Ministry of Finance shall control revenues efficiently and shall try to collect instalments from the various provinces as previously. Custom duties shall be charged as before, and the dues that have accrued shall be collected; but facilities shall be provided for making payments so that the people may not be burdened unnecessarily and the Government may not suffer any loss. Remissions granted by previous governments shall be recognized.

(7) *Trade and Agriculture.*—Afghanistan feels the need of these departments more than ever before; and, therefore, desires to establish commercial relations with Persia, Italy, France, Britain, Russia, America, Belgium, Germany, Japan and other countries, and Afghanistan would take advantage of the improvements made in all the civilized countries. The

present Government wishes to start railways, work mines and construct canals for irrigating lands, and also wishes to introduce into the country modern methods of agriculture as used in the civilized countries of the world.

(8) *Education and Arts.*—Education and arts for religious and secular advancement are considered very essential; and as soon as the Shoora-i-Milli (Parliament) is inaugurated and representatives from different provinces gather, ways and means shall be discussed, so that the nation may be educationally equipped for its safety and defence.

(9) *The Parliament.*—Representatives from all parts shall assemble at the centre, the people selecting them from among those who are learned, wise, faithful and have the good of the country at heart, and in whom the nation can fully put their trust. The ministers and

governors shall be responsible to the representatives; and the President of the Parliament shall have rights of scrutiny or investigation, and shall be elected by the representatives.

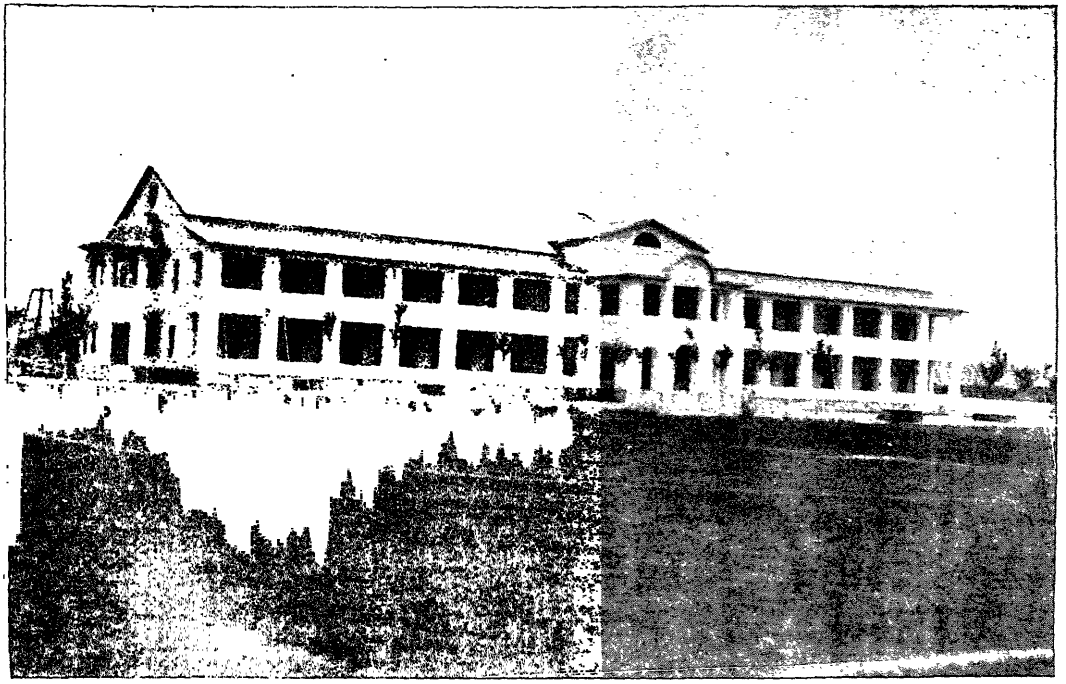
(10) The Prime Minister shall be selected and appointed by the King, and he shall organize a Cabinet of Ministers and submit its constitution to the King for approval and sanction.

During the short space of nine months the terrible Saqaoists had spread devastation and ruin all over the country; from the confines of Herat in the west right up to the Indian border in the east, pestilence and famines, robbery and dacoity were the order of the day. There was no order, no law, save that might was right. When the present King took Kabul, he found the whole country in a chaos, tribal wars raging on all sides, trade and agriculture badly crippled, people half starving and diseased, and many dressed in rags with their skin showing through the rents and imploring for food,

villages deserted, houses burnt, thousands of people rendered homeless, schools and colleges entirely closed, some of them burnt and demolished, the students having taken shelter in far off and remote places to avoid the wrath of this ignorant tyrant, who regarded them as renegades. Kabul, like all the other cities, was scarred and eaten away with fire. On all sides blackened ruins gaped as if in horror and the loathsome remains of public executions were to be found everywhere. The granaries were empty, and the grain fields had been neglected for reaping the gruesome harvest of human lives. To add to these even the elements seemed to be bent upon destruction. The cold winter—the coldest during a period of some thirty years—threatened to last for ever.

To heal as far as possible the wounds inflicted by the hands of tyranny was the melancholy task of this King, who took it up with the earnestness and solicitude of the humblest of workers. The innocent victims who yet survived were recalled from exile, or released from the prison,

The Ministry of Defence, new building.



Fawaid-i-Ama (P.W.D) Ministry, Kabul.

and were restored to the full enjoyment of their previous honours and fortunes. Unburied corpses of the unhappy victims of the tyrant were taken out from the ditches round the Arg, and buried in the grave-yards of their ancestors, and every consideration was shown to the bereaved and afflicted families. Within the space of a few months he was able to quell all the internal disturbances, to punish the robbers and outlaws, and to restore peace and order in a country that was on the brink of total annihilation.

After the tyrant's death his formidable army acknowledged the authority of the King from necessity rather than from choice. Nevertheless, as soon as he received their oath of fidelity, he issued a proclamation ordering his *lashkar* to give up the pursuits and addressing the Saqaoists in terms of mildness and moderation, lamenting rather than arraigning the wildest disorders of the time and assuring them that they would enjoy the full benefits of their property and that they need not have any apprehension of chastisement for their past conduct. But

nothing could reconcile the haughty spirit of the Saqaoists. They still lived in the infamous past when the Bacha was at their head and they were in full possession of the public treasury, which they could enjoy to their hearts' content. They ignored the King's clemency and broke out in an open rebellion at a time when the King had little regular army and insufficient arms and ammunition. But they had soon to learn that those, who were now masters of the capital, were not ordinary men—they were masters of the art of governing and administration. Within a week the insurrection was beaten down, and the ring-leaders of the insurgents were caught and court-martialled. The rest were once more allowed to settle down in their respective places, and encouraged to follow some honest pursuit. King Mohammad Nadir Shah on the very day that he entered the capital turned his attention to internal reforms. But much had yet to be done to return even to normal conditions. There were evils enough to be eradicated before reconstruction could begin. He soon made it known that

he would not shirk from the onerous task of leading his people towards civilization and progress, and would do his best to eliminate the plague of corruption and bribery. His desire has always been for permanent peace, to enable his people to continue in paths of industrial progress and thus preserve the national honour and prestige. He and his brothers applied themselves vigorously to reconcile the warring chiefs. The tribes, who thought once more of securing deliverance from the Central Government, learnt for the first time that they could no longer continue their once profitable occupation of looting and plundering neighbouring villages. The most pressing need of the country was to unite different parties and factions. Through the incessant efforts of these national heroes, we find that today the provinces are once more united under one constitution and are making steady progress. They might occasionally suffer from the partial abuse of delegated authority, but the general principle of Government is wise, simple and beneficent. Every body enjoys freedom of speech. All have

equal rights and enjoy equal chances of being exalted by just degrees to posts they deserve.

Reforms.

The Army.—After pacification and unification of the tribes, the first great field for reorganization was the army. Due to lack of funds the Government at first was unable to make any progress in that direction. It was therefore that the army, which must always come first in importance in such a country, could not for many months be organized. But it was the first item that claimed the immediate attention of the newly formed Government. There were still bandits and opportunists who might imitate the example of the Bacha and with their men swoop down upon the capital at any time. Indeed, for the time being, King Mohammad Nadir Shah, though he could rely on the loyalty of the *lashkar* and on his own general popularity, had little organized protection against such dreaded foes. In the first chapter the readers were given an idea of the wretched condition of Amanullah Khan's army. They were ill-kept and ill-fed.

An Afghan Lancer.

An Afghan Soldier.

The cantonments were no better than stables. Sanitation was in a deplorable condition. There were no military parades. The military school existed in name only. We have also seen the results of this state of affairs. When the revolution broke out none was willing to offer his services, and the few, who were forced to go to the front, were so demoralized and dissatisfied that they did not offer strong resistance. King Nadir Shah knew all this. He had himself been a Commander-in-Chief. He was fully aware of the wide-spread corruption among officers, and the various grievances of the soldiers. He had more than once protested in vain against the unwise steps of the ex-King's Government. He was not in favour of the Makoolat system, by which the Government supplied food to soldiers and deducted expenses from their salaries. He knew that this would go to enrich those who were in charge of the supply. He wanted that the soldiers should be paid their full salaries in hard cash. But the misguided ruler had not accepted these friendly counsels.

H. M. King Nadir Shah, now that he was at the head of the state, benefited by his personal knowledge and experience. He enhanced the salary of the soldier to twenty-five rupees a month, besides granting him ration allowance. He is paid regularly on the first of every month. In addition to the Central Military Hospital, every cantonment is provided with a dispensary and a qualified doctor. The old and ruined cantonments are repaired and the new ones on the latest models are being built all over the country. Every cantonment is supplied with spacious playgrounds, and great impetus is given to sports. A large club has been opened for the soldiers who are now better dressed and decently equipped. They undergo regular training. Punctuality is strictly observed. Military laws and regulations are strictly carried out. There is a military school and a military college, besides special arrangements for the instruction under experienced European experts on modern lines of officers already in service. Recently the foundation-stone of a military college has been laid in the historic fort of Bala

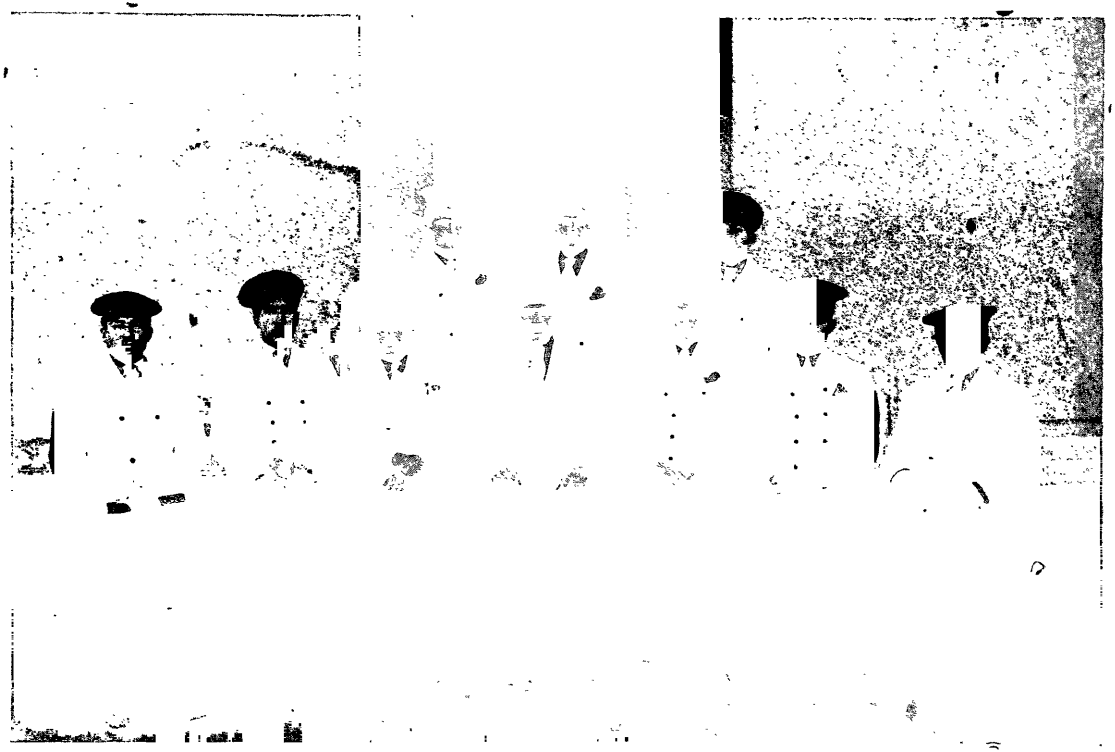
Hisar. When completed, this will be one of the grandest buildings of its kind. Nor is this all that has been done for the army. The soldiers are contented and satisfied, a spirit of brotherly comradeship has been created among them and there is far great cohesion amongst them than had ever been achieved before.

Education.—Side by side with the development of the army, the King devotes much of his attention to the education of his countrymen. He considers that the true happiness of his people can only be achieved through education and peace. He himslef is a man of great learning and is a great linguist, commanding considerable fluency in six languages. Though the major portion of his life has been spent in the army and diplomatic service, he does not lack the genius of a great man of letters.

One of his first acts after taking Kabul was the re-opening of schools and colleges, and each year witnesses the establishment of new educational institutions. One of the latest is the Faculty of Medicine (the first medical college of the country), where the

medium of instruction is Persian. A medical school was started in the second year of H. M.'s reign providing junior medical instruction to many young men of the country. All the expenses of the various institutions are borne by the Government. No fees are charged and nearly 20% of the students, besides getting the benefits of free tuition, free books and other materials, are paid handsome stipends. Every Habibya College student without exception gets 20 Afghanis per mensem for the first year, 30 for the second and 40 for the third year. Faculty students, in addition to their monthly stipends of 50 Afghanis each, get free meals and clothing. Great care is taken of the health of the students. The Ministry of Education has a well-equipped dispensary and a qualified doctor. The students are properly examined and treated; no charge is made either for consultation or for treatment. In serious cases students are sent abroad on Government expense. While writing about the medical aid for the students, it will not be out of place to mention the medical arrangements made for the general public. Many hospitals

Afghan Students in Turkey.



Medical College Students, with their Principal in the centre.

including hospitals for mental diseases have been opened in various parts of the country. A tuberculosis sanatorium on modern lines, epuipped with all modern conveniences, has been erected at Ali Abad. The Government maintains an orphanage where children are carefully looked after, fed and clothed and adequate arrangements have been made for their education.

Government lends a very sympathetic ear to the directors of sports. Every school and college is provided with playgrounds, and supplied with all the materials without any charge. Competitions and tournaments are held, where members of the Royal Family and sometimes the King himself attends and distributes prizes. The Scout movement, the latest novelty for the Afghans, has been introduced in the country. The annual prize distribution is held under the auspices of the King himself. Promising students after passing the final local examination are sent abroad to U. S. A., England, France, Germany and Turkey on state expense.

Another club has been started for the

students, which, besides being equipped with arrangements for all sorts of indoor and outdoor games, possesses a fine, free and well-equipped reading-room. All the expenses are borne by the Government.

Technical education to fit students for various walks of public life and different branches of industry is also fully provided for, and there is no career in which even the humblest of H. M.'s subject cannot hope to enter, equipped with a complete training entirely at state expense. A great stimulus is given to literary research and production by the establishment of a special department, *Darul Talif*—Bureau of Education, under qualified professors of different nationalities, helped by the Afghan graduates themselves. Due to this encouragement many journals have come into being in different cities of the country. In Kabul alone there are about half a dozen, of which " The Kabul " issued by the Anjuman-i-Adabi deserves special mention. " The Iqtisad" or the Economic Journal is another, and deals with various economic problems and provides information about home industries. In all the colleges

there have been started 'Debating societies' which have produced a very healthy effect on the student community. Historical meetings to commemorate important events of Islamic history in general and national in particular have been occasionally held and greatly appreciated by the Government.

In order to offer facilities to people desirous of learning foreign languages, evening classes have been started, in which free instruction is given in German, French and English and have proved very popular.

The King himself is a connoisseur of art and gives it every encouragement, as in his opinion, it contributes to the happiness of the people.

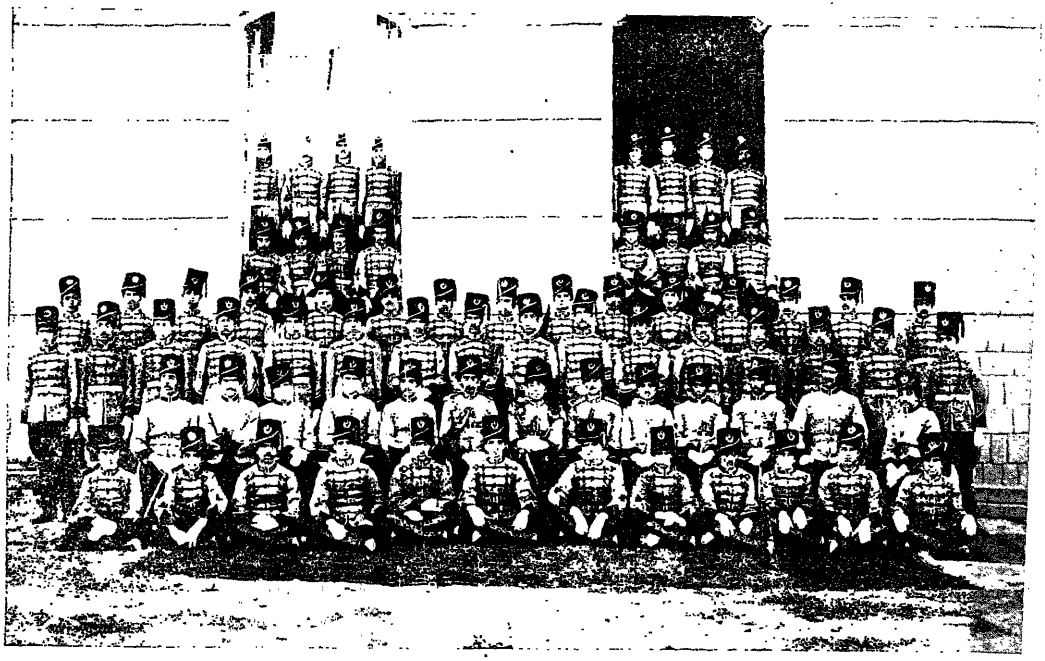
Legal.—The King has from the beginning set himself about legal reforms and punitive measures. Tortures and all forms of cruel punishments formerly in vogue have been totally abolished. The old dungeons and insanitary prison-houses have been demolished, and new ones are being built on modern lines. Slavery is no longer allowed and a transgresser is severely dealt with. One of the most recent proclamations made by

the King epitomizes the new spirit. It categorically details the freedom of the subjects, the liberty of vote and the democracy of the new system of the Government. A new department—Jamiat-ul-Ulama, the Assembly of the Learned, has been established to look into legal problems and submit their opinions on the new laws that are being passed from time to time.

Constitutional.—The constitutional reforms introduced by His Majesty must be regarded as his most praiseworthy act, a measure by which he parted with his autocratic powers and transferred them to the representatives of the people. During the last days of King Amanullah Khan's reign, we heard of a parliament, but it was a mere farce, more for purposes of show than any real utility. The King was head-strong and obstinate, and did not like to give it any real power.

King Mohammad Nadir Shah, realizing that no people can in these days make any progress without participating in the affairs of their own Government, established a regular Council of State. This Majlis, as the Afghan Parliament is called, consists of two

Members of the Afghan Parliament, 1932.



His, Majesty's Guard of Honour,
with the Commandant, Sardar Asadullah Khan in the centre.

houses, the House of Peers (Majlis-i-A'yan), and the House of Representatives, Majlis-i-Shura-i-Milli. The former is composed of sixty members who hold their seats by right of birth or by nomination by the King. Most of them are men who have rendered great and meritorious services to the country. The House of Representatives consists of 120 members elected by ballot from among the voters in each constituency. Suffrage is not restricted by any property qualification, and is extended to all people over twenty years of age, possessing sound moral character. A general meeting (*Loya Jirgah*) must be held at least once in every three years. No new taxes can be imposed or new laws framed without the consent of the *Loya Jirgah*. But large powers are reserved for the King; this being an absolute necessity in a country where democratic institutions are yet in their infancy and which has yet to learn the art of Government by experience. Only the King can declare war or negotiate for peace with the enemy or enter into treaties. No laws passed by the Majlis can become operative until his sanction has been obtained. He

can, in times of emergency, issue an urgent ordinance which temporarily overrides any or all existing laws. In the constitutional law of the country, the independence of the state is put down as of primary importance and every King at the time of his coronation has to take a solemn oath to respect it and to preserve it at all costs. Immunity of the individual from unnecessary interference by state officials has been given emphasis. Indeed, it is for the first time in the history of the country that such freedom has been granted to the subjects. and they are allowed to choose their own representatives and be governed by them.

We give below His Majesty King Nadir Shah's inaugural address at the first sitting of the new Afghan Parliament (July 6th, 1931) : —

> "I open this Assembly of Moslem Counsellors in the name of God, the Omnipotent, the Powerful, who is the dispenser of happiness in this world and the next. And I pray, for the guidance of the

nation of Afghanistan unto God the Great so that under the shadow of the holy Laws of the Prophet Mohammad (may blessings and peace be on him) they may render high and especial services to this holy land of Islam and once again glorify the religion of God and to assist in the advancement and progress of Afghanistan.

My beloved people! may God be praised, that we see Afghanistan once again emerging safe and sound from the difficulties and distress born of dissensions and civil wars. With mind at ease and heart full of hope I begin to lay the foundation of this Institution of National Counsellors and proceed to explain to you the meaning of National Assembly. May God be praised that you and I are Musalmans. Conferences are the foundation of all our actions. By the injunctions of the Holy Quran we

were, and are, bound to hold consultations and in future too it shall be incumbent on us to act accordingly. Prophet Mohammad (may prayers and peace be on him) used to hold consultations for the solutions of problems. The rightly-guided Khalifas (may God be pleased with them) used to carry on their affairs by consultation. The Khalifas of the Bani Umayya Dynasty also held consultations. But it was the Khalifas of the House of Abbas who gave to such consultations a solid foundation in the procedure of their affairs. The representatives of the people used to be present at the Court of the day and held consultations with the representatives of the Nation in all affairs relating to the State. Subsequent to the Abbassi Khalifas the rulers of Islam, considering consultations to be the negation of their power and

Military Cadets, 1933

H. M. King Mohd Nadir Shah at the new Military College Constructions, Bala Hisar, Kabul.

prestige, paid less attention to this institution. Consequently, many periods of disruption of changes and convulsions took place in the Moslem world.

In Afghanistan conferences were held from remote antiquity, since we can consider the Afghan *Jirga* as the just ruler of the Afghans. For us consultation is no new thing. If the previous sovereigns did not hold conferences, the nation in their tribes and clans at any rate have not abandoned to this day their *Jirga* system. Amanullah Khan formed the Council of State and the Representatives of the Nation used to be present at the centre of the Government; but that Council or *jirga* of Afghanistan did not prove to be advantageous.

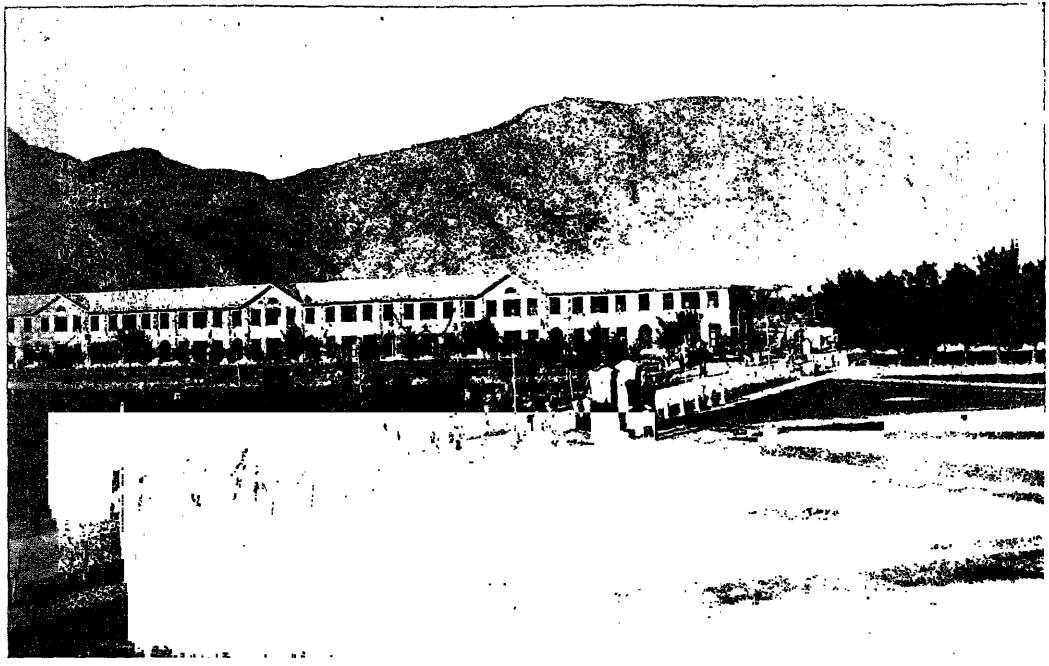
I pray to God that such dark happenings may not occur again in Afghanistan and that He may

grant us opportunities and judgment so that we may be able to remove all the causes of complaints as between the Nation and the Government and contrary to the precedent the Nation may regard the Government as its own Government and as a true servant desirous of the progress of the country. The modern Consultative Assemblies, like the Assemblies of all the Nations, which in the course of time have acquired progress and improvement, are an example of the advanced nature of the Councils of our preceding ages. Although the Nation has upto now expressed no desire for any such things, since I considered, and still hold, a National Assembly to be the foundation of the prosperity and as a special instrument for the reform of the country and which I had declared in my programme on

the very first day, by the grace of God on this occasion when peace prevails all over Afghanistan I am enabled to inaugurate such an Assembly. When you read the little guide to the National Assembly you will know what difference there is between an Assembly of to-day and the *jirgas* of old. If you exercise properly your rights and watch the proceedings of the Government and make attempts at improving the National Assembly of Afghanistan the same will become the moulder of peace and the foundation of the prosperity and the advancement of the country; and I have hopes in God the High that civil wars and dissensions and disputes will disappear for ever from this motherland of ours and personal questions will no longer be the cause of the downfall and the ruin of this Islamic land. And this country will ever remain

happy, and the changes and revolutions will not affect or be the cause of shattering and uprooting the prosperity and advancement of the country and the Nation; and the miscreants will not have the chance again to be at the helm of affairs. Able and righteous rulers and benevolent agents of the country and the Nation alone will be selected for the betterment of Afghanistan and they will engage themselves in her service. Tyranny and the worship of innovations and corruption and bribery will disappear altogether from this country.

I am in a position to say that on the day that the representatives of the Nation in the Consultative Assembly understood their rights and distinguished the harmful from the beneficial from the point of view of the general happiness, self-interest and



A portion of the New Bazaar

Darrah - i - Shikari Road.

dissensions will be removed and just from that day the epoch of happiness of Afghanistan shall commence. I pray to God that that day of happiness of our beloved country, the country belonging to me and belonging to yourselves, may be just this day, the first date of the opening of the Consultative Assembly. God is Omnipotent. He is merciful, he is gracious. As He has granted release to Afghanistan from a civil revolution and has vouchsafed peace to Afghanistan and bestowed on us honour, strength and unity, so in the same way I am not despondent regarding His further Grace. And we cherish the confident hope that the past revolution would be the last period of calamity and distress to our Nation, and I trust by the Grace of God it will have ended for ever. And this first

day of the inauguration of the Consultative Assembly will be the first day of the period of happiness of Afghanistan which will last for ever.

Honourable Reprensentatives! do not be despondent. Periods of darkness such as we have passed through, are to be found in the history of every nation of the world. After every difficulty there comes ease. After every down-fall there is a sure ascent provided only that the creatures of God do not turn away from the path of Righteousness and Humanity, and do not mistake defects for efficiency and the means of degradation for weapons of progess.

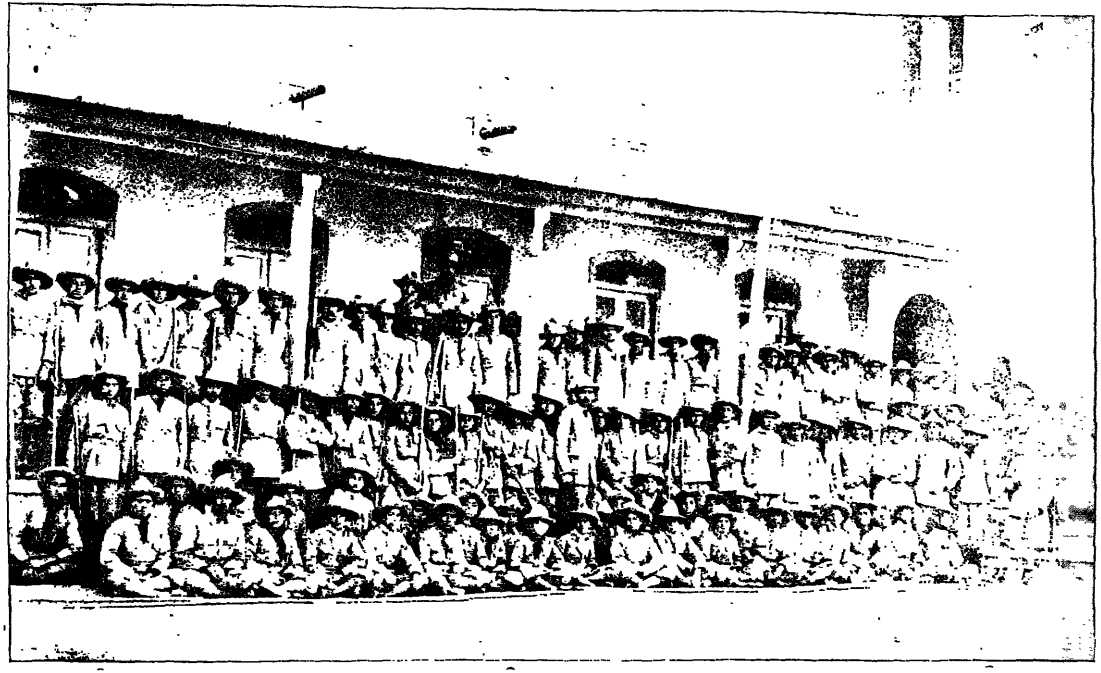
My dear children and my beloved people! what I wish to impart to you with regard to this new period, is the present foreign policy of Afghanistan, so that you may be in touch and well-informed about the foreign policy

of your Government of to-day. As to the remaining problems, which have arisen during this period of a year and a half and a few months, light will be thrown on the same by the Prime Minister and the other Ministers. I wish to place before you whatever correspondence and transactions have taken place with the friendly States from the very beginning of my arrival to this sacred soil of Afghanistan, so that my foreign policy may not remain undisclosed.

When I set foot on the soil of Afghanistan, myself and Shah Wali Khan and Shah Mahmud Khan remained in the southern regions and Mohammad Hashim Khan and Mohammad Gul Khan were despatched to the East. At that time in the southern region there were no evidences of the influence of the followers of

Bacha Saqqao and no one gave any importance or respect or placed trust in the Saqqavi Government. But the moment Amanullah Khan with an army from Kandahar appeared in the boundary of Kalat and Muqar and announced to the people round about his intention of invading Kabul, the people of the southern region became somewhat suspicious and they thought that I along with my brothers was engaged in the service for and on behalf of Amanullah Khan. I made it clear that my endeavour was put forth with reference to no personality. Even myself and my brothers had not come for establishing ourselves. We wanted only that peace should reign in Afghanistan and that the civil wars should vanish and that that person whom the entire Afghan Nation selected

Football Winners, Independence Day Celebrations, 193[illegible]



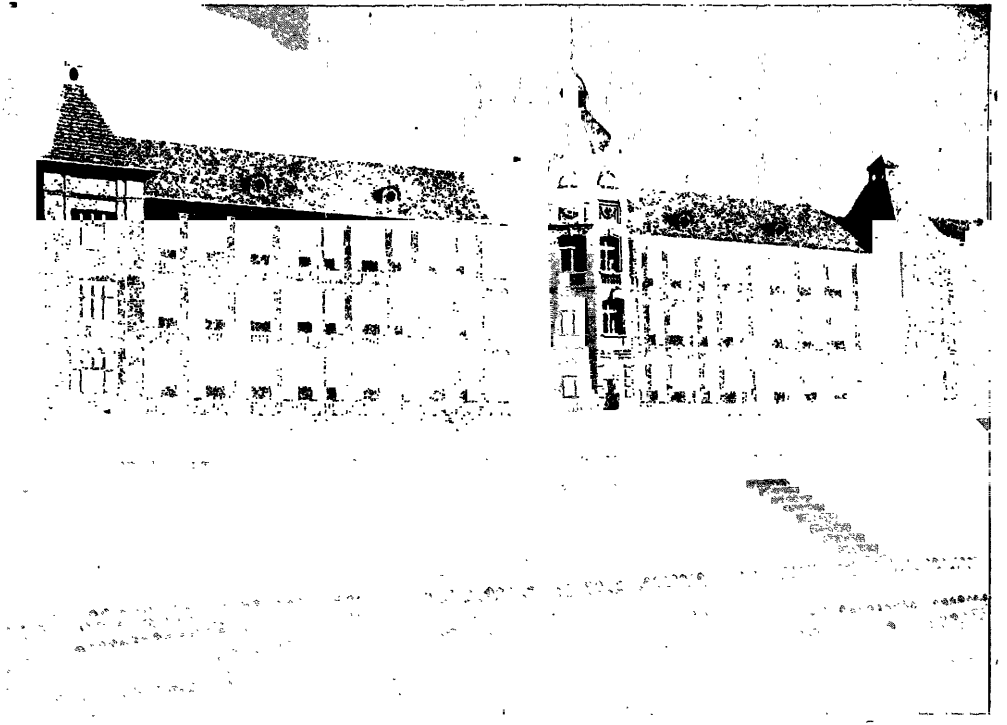
Boy Scouts, 1933

as their King should be appointed to the position. However, in spite of all insistence from me, the people of the southern regions remained suspicious of my declaration and were not satisfied. I was, therefore, compelled in the absence of acknowledgment and confirmation of the entire Afghan Nation, not to take into consideration the declaration of my Kingship. In spite of all the pressure that was brought to bear upon me with every event of importance and occasions of defeat and failures, I always relied on the name of God than on the name of Sovereignty and always gave preference to the kindness and blessing of God over the help that I might have attained by the title of King, so much so that in most parts of the southern regions, confusion of thought prevailed and the followers of Bacha Saqqao acquired

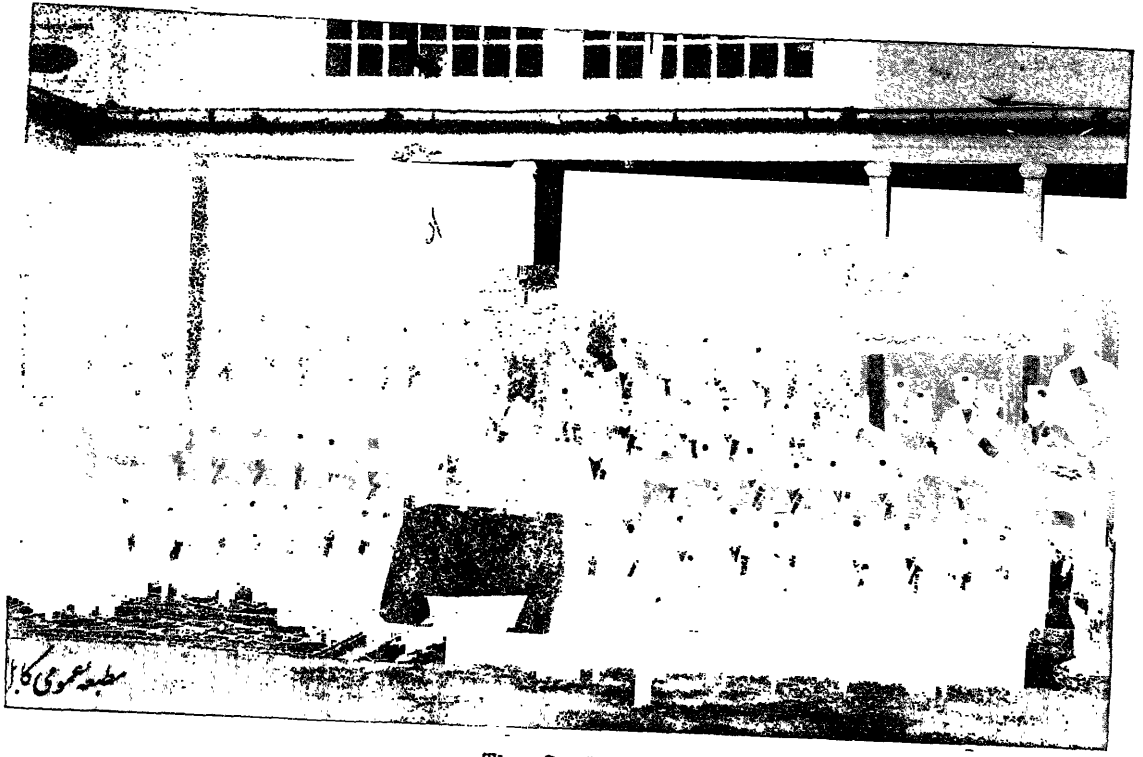
complete control in the southern regions. They captured Gardez and occupied many parts of Khost, Orgoon, etc. At that time I thought to seek the help of the Afghan tribes in the independent territory. I wanted to get support from the Orakzai tribe. At that time the path of negotiations between me and the Orakzais was in the hands of the British. Through Haji Mohammad Akbar Khan I entered into negotiations with the British Government. But the latter did not agree. They adduced their neutrality as their excuse and pointed out that to allow the Orakzais to go over to me would be a contravention of their declaration of neutrality and the British wrote to me a letter to this effect, which letter to this day is with me. I was not disheartened over all this. I did not refrain from my

undertakings. The brave tribe of Jaji and a section of the Mangals and Ahmadzais were in my hands. At last I decided to seek help from the Waziris whose pride in Islam and Afghanistan was touched and who were ready to support me and emancipate Afghanistan. The Waziris accepted my invitation and they presented themselves before me. The British Government became more rough towards me in this connection. They brought considerable pressure upon Haji Mirza Mahammad Akbar Khan in order to force me to send away back the Waziris from Jaji to Waziristan. The declaration and letters that I had addressed to the people of Kandahar and the tribes of those districts and had sent them through Abdul Ghani Khan *via* Chaman were all

received by the tribes of Kandahar and the proud Achakzais. But the British Government prevented Abdul Ghani Khan himself and took strong measures against his proceeding further and did not allow him to enter Kandahar. The moment my declaratory letters were received by them the tribes and clans of the provinces of Kandahar stood by me and I received applications declaring their pleasure at my efforts and their readiness to oppose the followers of Saqqao and their preparedness to execute my orders in the south. In spite of the objection of the British Government as soon as I sent Haji Mirza Mohammad Akbar Khan again to Parachinar to explain the impossibility of sending back the Waziris, I despatched Shah Wali Khan, Shah Mahmud Khan and



The Refiqi Sanatorium. (1933)



The Orphanage.

Mohammad Gul Khan with other Waziri chiefs and a section of the Jajis, Mangals and Ahmadzais, Jadrans, Totakhels and Gardezis to the front of Lohgar and Kabul. The British Government were not as yet satisfied with the reasons of impossibilities of sending back the Waziris when the news of the conquest of Kabul was received. In short, before the fall of Kabul there were considerable obscurity and complications between myself and the British on the question of the Waziris. I was compelled by fate to try and see as to the tribes and clans of Afghans from whom I could get help because there was left in me hardly a breath of life. The threats of the British Government with regard to the co-operation of the Waziris and the tyranny of Saqqao had no

importance in my eyes, since the period of my life was now very limited. I had determined to live with self-respect or die along with my family. Certain interested parties after the conquest of Kabul set afoot a propaganda to the effect that while I was in the southern regions the British had lent me help and that I had in return given the British certain concessions. To-day, in the presence of you, the Representatives of the Nation, I avow that I have received no help whatsoever from any foreign Power. Only the kindness and help of God the Powerful and the loyalty of the people of Afghanistan have enabled me in capturing Kabul. To support my efforts to free my country, only the especial Divine Grace and the valour and the spirit of the general Afghan Nation were

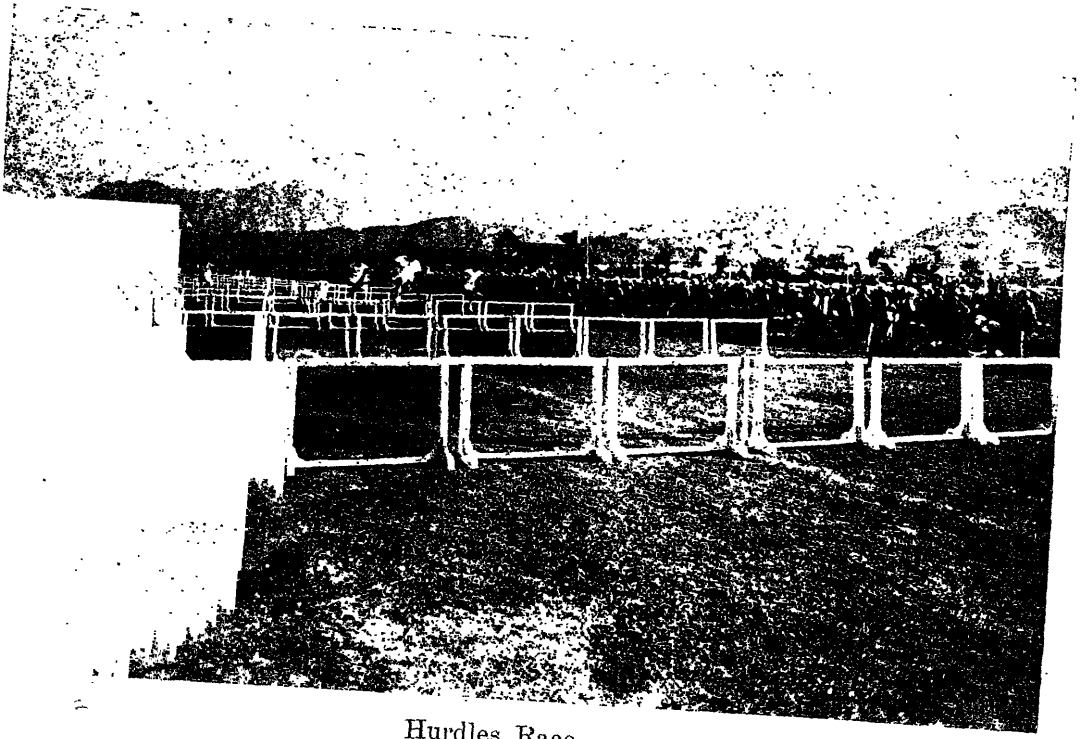
utilized. As for those persons and people who cherished hostility towards the Government of Amanullah Khan, as well as the Ministers and officers and the spiritual leaders and respectable members of public, who were not agreeable to the personally harmful activities of Amanullah Khan, it is certain that their want of agreement with Amanullah Khan was for the good of the motherland and the happiness of the nation. They desired to keep him back from those thoughtless and vainglorious activities, which did not take into consideration the sentiments of the Nation or of religion since by the advice of certain short-sighted people he had disgusted the Nation and had kept away from himself all the people of influence and fidelity whose services for the welfare of the community would

have proved valuable to the Nation.

My beloved people ! I was much impressed when I heard the prattle of interested parties. My policy in Afghanistan is without any secret or mystery. My policy in Afghanistan is open policy. I wish to make everything clear to you, so that you may be acquainted with every circumstances and may know your own affairs.

When I reached Kabul and you my countrymen pressed and importuned me to be the chosen King of Afghanistan, the Foreign Ministry immediately announced the event to the whole world. In reply to the proclamation the Foreign Ministries of all the friendly States sent congratulations and recognition of the present Government and acknowledgement and announcement on their part of the same. The

The Arts School, Kabul.



Hurdles Race.
Independence Day, 1932.

Turkish Ambassador was present in Kabul. The Ambassador of the Soviet Government also was the first to reach Kabul and the friendly nations one after another sent their Ambassadors and accredited representatives to the Court of Afghanistan. In accordance with the principles of International laws I recognized all the treaties which the preceding Government had entered into with the friendly States. I have made no other treaty, secret or open, at all. No doubt, last year some of the States rendered assistance to us. For example the Government of Great Britain without any condition rendered help to Afghanistan. This help consisted of a loan of £175,000 without interest and 10,000 rifles and five lakh cartridges. And since this help is free from any kind of taint, secret or open,

and is a gift without any stipulation, I have accepted it with gratefulness. Amanullah Khan, too, had accepted motors and telegraph wires and other things from the British Government and in the campaign against Mullah Abdullah 5,000 rifles and cartridges were accepted from the Government of India,—transactions which to this day have not been made public and even when Amanullah Khan was in London, there were presented to him by the Government of His Britannic Majesty some amounts in cash, 10,000 rifles and sundry articles as gift, which Amanullah Khan accepted. I tell you plainly and clearly what I have effected in respect of foreign policy. And I give you assurance that my Government upto this day has given concessions or rights to no State, and so long as

I am alive, God willing, no such transaction will receive my signature. I do not at all wish that there should be any secrecy or mystery in the Foreign policy of Afghanistan. Similarly, I advise my Government and my nation that the geographical position of Afghanistan will under no circumstances tolerate secret diplomacy. It lies on us ever to eschew the ways of secret diplomacy.

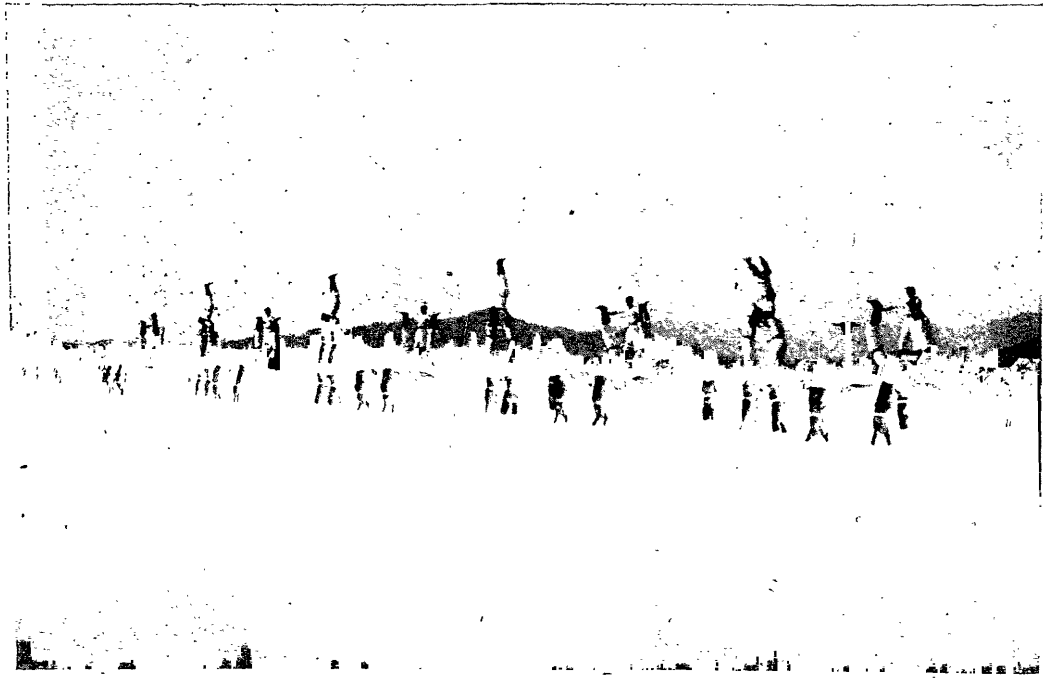
Besides the weapons which the British Government gave us as help we have contracted to purchase 16,000 rifles and one crore and eight lakhs cartridges from France. The price of nine thousand out of the same has been paid off in cash and the balance will be paid in due course. The German Government too has assumed towards us an attitude of friendliness. For it has transferred to us

the balance of Amanullah Khan's loan and has extended the period of repayment by instalment from 6 to 8 years. The German Government has given us 5,000 rifles and five lakhs of cartridges and has included the price thereof in the loan, the repayment of which has to be effected in 8 years. At the same time, about 5,000 rifles and 50,000 cartridges in addition to the weapons which I have mentioned above have been purchased from England, the amount in respect of which has been paid in cash.

Similary, we have bought at a proper price from other friendly States weapons for Afganistan. The treaties which have recently been entered into and which are being exchanged or which are under negotiations are as follows :—

A treaty between Japan and Afghan-

Ready for Gymnastics, Independence Day Celebrations, 1932.



Gymnastics, Independence Day Celebrations, 1932.

istan has been concluded and is being exchanged.

A treaty of neutrality between Afghanistan and the Soviet Russia has been concluded *de novo*.

An agreement for boundary Commission between Afghanistan and Iran has been reached.

We are going to enter into negotiations with Soviet Russia in respect of a commercial treaty.

We shall enter into negotiations with Soviet Russia in respect of Postal Exchange.

A treaty between Afghanistan and the Government of the Hedjaz will soon be negotiated.

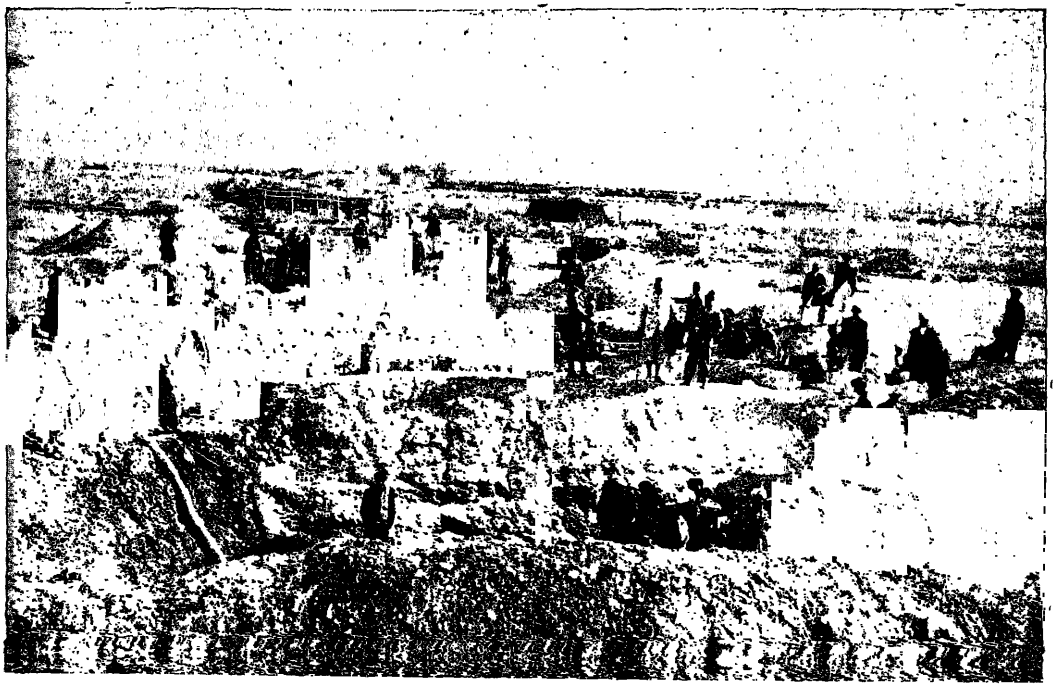
In short, whatever has taken place and whatever is being done has been declared to you without any reservation. And I wish once more to aver to you that the most advantageous policy

which can be imagined for Afghanistan,—and I always recommend its continuance,—is this : that Afghanistan should observe neutrality and with regard to her neighbours and all the friendly States should maintain relations based on such a process and method as may not be inimical to the interest of Afghanistan and that she should give practical assurance to her neighbours, that Afghanistan will hold the balance perfectly even with regard to the equal status of her neighbours and that she will hold on to the same policy. And it is just this policy which is the most wholesome, both for Afghanistan and for the neighbours of Afghanistan.

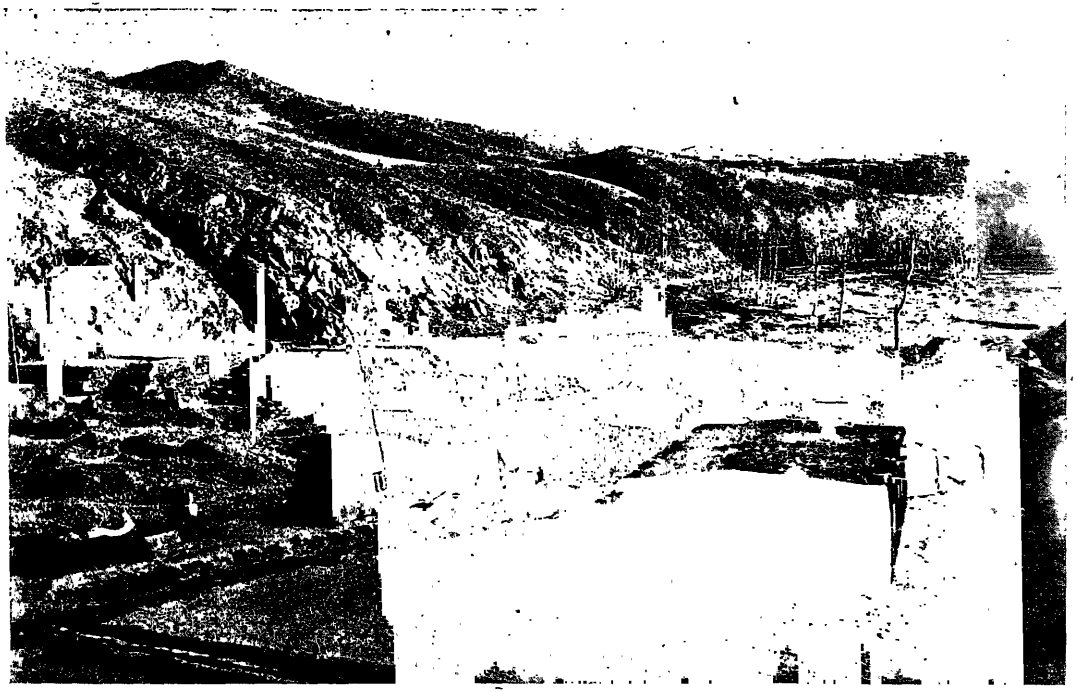
As regards the Independent Frontier Tribes, let not this problem, too, remain untouched. For the question of Independent Territory is a question of equal

importance to Afghanistan and the British Government. Afghanistan is not free from anxiety about the border tribes with regard to the attitude of and conduct towards each other and the Government of India. I might say that the Frontier Tribes and ourselves are one with each other from the standpoint of Islam and tribal relations. The British Government has probably had experience of and witnessed this sympathy on the part of the Frontier Tribes towards Afghanistan and *vice versa* for many a long year. We connot possibly repudiate this fellow-feeling. For the distress of the Independent Frontier Tribes is sure to have repercussions in Afghanistan. From this point of view the well-being and uplift of the Independent Tribes are always our desire and aspiration.

Respected Deputies! this is the policy of your Government to-day, which I have described to you, so that you may be acquainted with facts without any reservation or exaggeration. Pray, be attentive to your duties. Ponder well over every problem and then give your decision. Apathy towards affairs of State is a great sin. In this very Assembly you will be deciding the fate of a great Nation. The mistakes and errors on your part will not be considered as your personal errors and mistakes. The harm resulting therefrom will accrue to a mighty Moslem nation and Government. Pray, apply considered judgment and practical circumspection in the solution of the problems before you. You have had sufficient experience as to what amout of harm was incurred by the preceding Government, on account of



The Saracha Bridge Jelalabad



The Surkhab Dam, Logar.

recklessness and the lack of discrimination between good and evil on the part of the Nation. To put this country day by day into difficulties,—I do not know how to construe this except to describe it as the perpetration of felony.

Since your Government attaches great importance to consultations and desires that it should ever be the source of such procedure that it could attain acceptance in the sight of God and the joy of His creatures and should achieve every necessary reform in accordance with the public sentiments, now with perfect joy I open this exalted Assembly of National Counsellors, and I have it in view that by Divine Grace as deliberative assistance to the Consultative Assembly and to attain other exalted aims I shall be able in future to institute an Assembly of Nobles.

In conclusion, I entrust unto God, you as well as the Government, and the beloved Nation as a whole and pray unto God for your triumph and for the success of your sagacious deliberations."

His Majesty the King is within easy approach of the people. Thursday is a public Durbar day, and on that day any one of his subjects without distinction of birth or wealth can, without let or hindrance, see the King and lay before him his grievances.

Trade and other developments.—The commercial reforms and developments of the last four years are highly important. In spite of the great financial crisis due to the fall in the price of silver and general economic depression, statistics clearly show a steady increase in exports and imports. Government lends a helping hand to all the promising merchants and enterprisers by supplying them with large sums of money without interest. Recently an Afghan student, in possession of a French diploma of

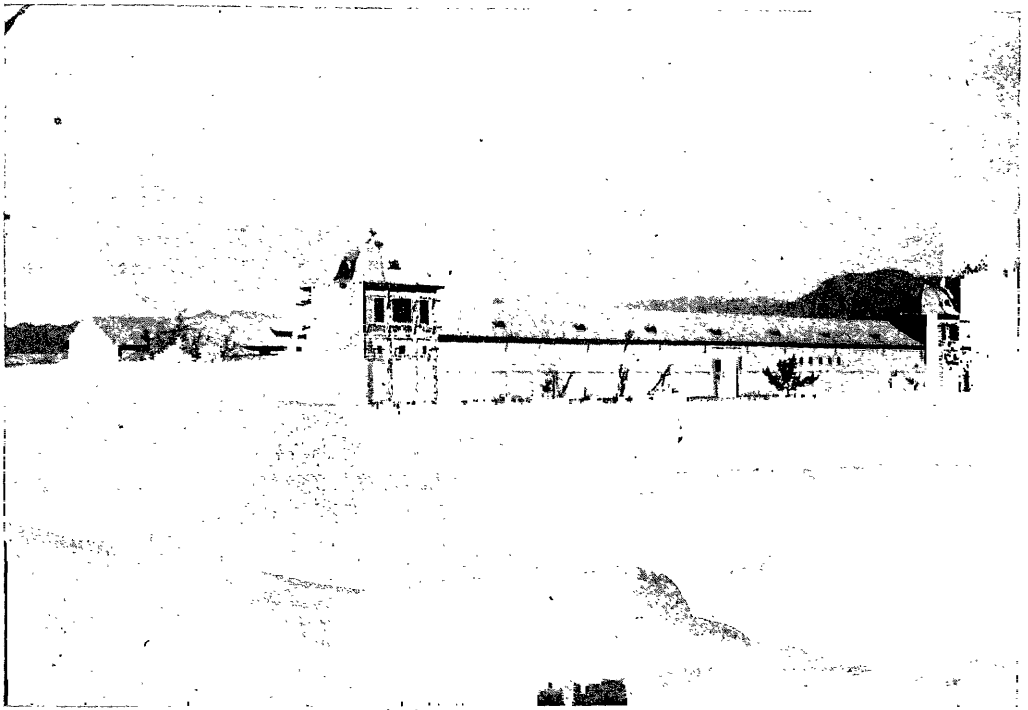
Tanning, was given the sum of twenty thousand Afghanis to start a tanning factory at Kabul. His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad Zahir Khan, with a view to help and encourage the industry, became a partner by lending him another hundred thousand Afghanis. Spinning and weaving mills, paper and sugar factories will shortly commence work in different parts of the country. About half a dozen water-dams are being constructed under the supervision of Italian and German Engineers, which, when completed, would irrigate 95,000 acres of land. The first Afghan Bank, Shirkat-i-Ashami, has been established and steps are being taken for the establishment of an Imperial Bank with branches in some of the important trade centres inside and outside Afghanistan.

The Postal system with its adjuncts, the Telegraph and the Telephone, is well organized and efficiently conducted.

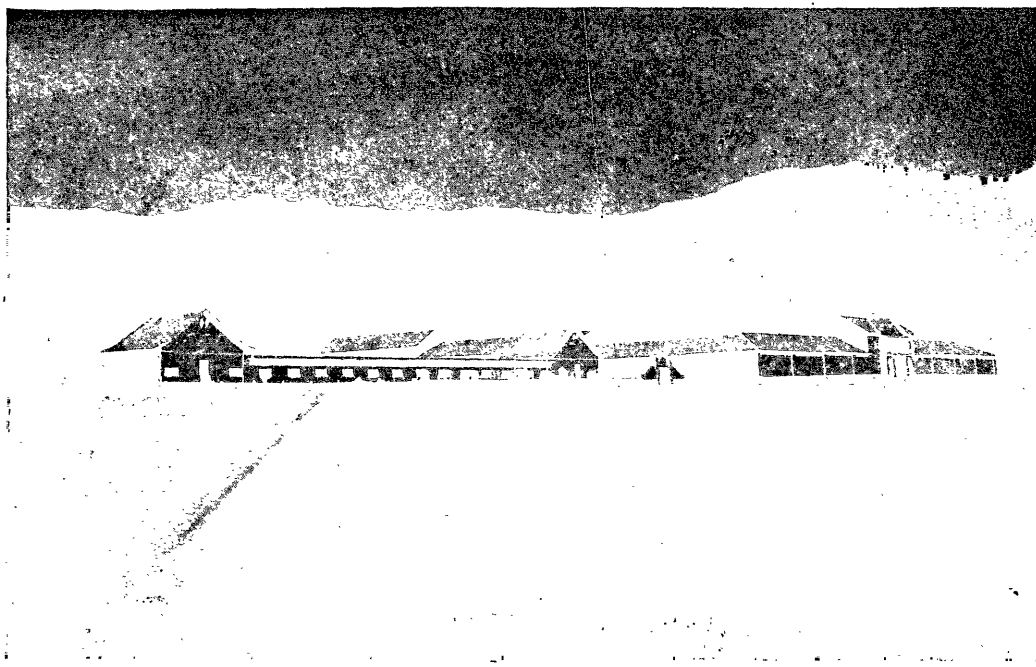
To facilitate trade, new roads are being constructed and the old ones are thoroughly repaired. In 1928 there were 1,100 miles of road open to traffic, now there are 1,800 miles

open, and nearly 500 miles more are in process of construction; it has now become possible to travel in a car from the remote north to the extreme south almost without a break. Mines of coal and other useful metals are being worked, and those who discover any useful mine are given suitable rewards. Besides the repairs done to the old buildings that had fallen to decay or were burnt to ashes during the revolution, and which are restored to their ancient decency and magnificence, great attention is being paid to the construction of new public buildings. All these works of the King bear the stamp of his genius. The public monuments with which he adorns the capital are executed not only by his orders but undergo frequent inspections by him. These monuments, it is generally believed, will bear permanent testimony to his taste and munificence, and will command the attention and admiration of the travellers.

The old and neglected gardens are attended to once more and new ones are being laid out for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.



The New Customs House, Kabul.



The Dairy Farm, Aliabad.

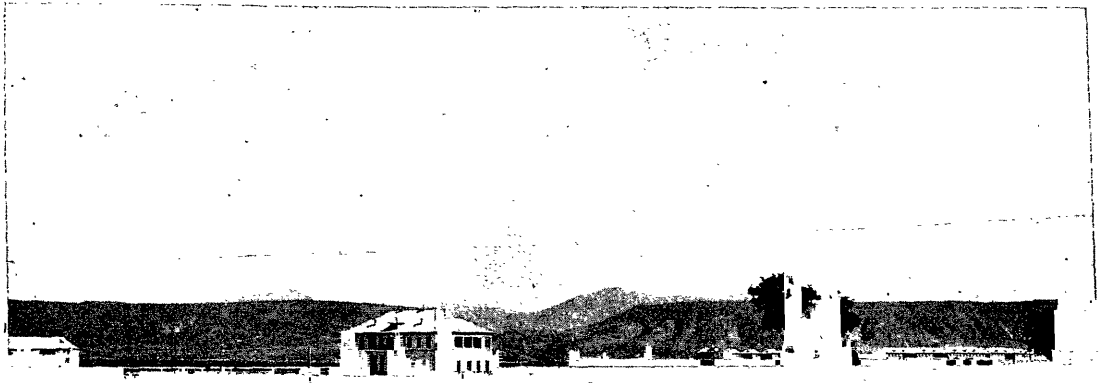
Dairies and poultry farms on modern lines have been started, and are supplying the best milk and eggs to the people of Kabul. Efforts are being made to improve the breed of live-stock.

Outside the city large fields are converted into playgrounds where can be heard the happy shouts of the citizens playing football, hockey and other games. The innumerable new buildings that enhance the splendour of the capital and other cities, the beautiful face of the country cultivated and adorned with immense gardens and playgrounds and the unbroken peace of the last four years enjoyed by so many tribes have made them forgetful of their acient animosities and relieved them from the apprehension of future danger.

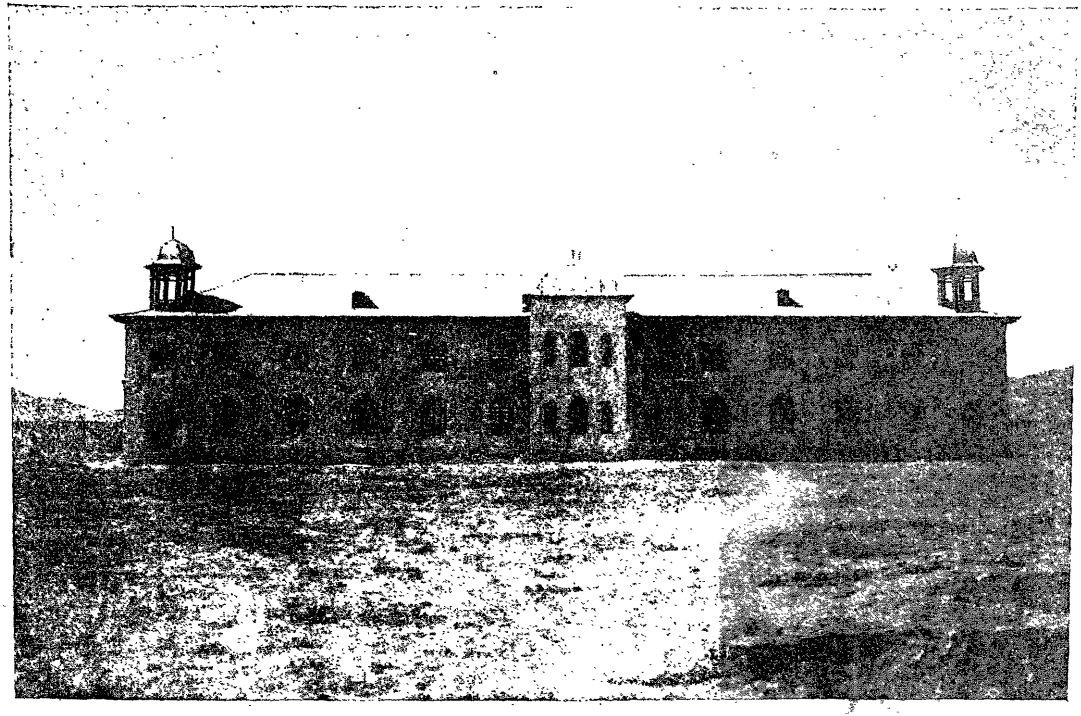
The labours of this monarch are repaid many times over by the immense satisfaction resulting from his success and by the exquisite delight of beholding the general happiness of which he is the author.

The strength and clearness of his reasoning, and the breadth of his views have already given him the rank of the first and

foremost of the Afghan diplomats and one of the greatest organizers that the East has ever produced. He is the idol of the Easterner. He possesses all the qualities of a strong and brave ruler combined with the diplomatic skill of a modern statesman. He is the wise general of the East and the experienced diplomat of the West. Weigh him as carefully as you like in the scale of historical criticism, he will always take rank with the greatest sovereigns and reformers of the East. He is always devoted to the advancement of public prosperity and is extremely careful of the interests of his people. He never allows himself the smallest respite in the discharge of his duties, and is always ready to remedy evils, to redress wrongs and to acquaint himself personally with the condition of his people. The Afghans fully realize that they have now a king who has proved his worth time and again in war and in peace. He is called the "Saviour of the Nation"—Naji-i-Millat. His personality and his conduct have already secured for him the highest reward that a sovereign can aspire to—the love and esteem



The Military Club, with the new Cantonment in the background.



The Cantonment Mosque.

of his people. Those who know these virtues of their king are happy to contemplate that very soon they will find their motherland on the path of real success and progress, and earnestly pray that they might long enjoy the benign influence of his wise and just administration.

The Kargnah Dam, near Kabul.

The Kharwar Dam, Logar.

INDEX

A

Abbas, House of, 194
Abdul Ahad Khan, 54
Abdul Aziz Khan, 30, 152
Abdul Ghafoor, 42
Abdul Ghani Khan, 141, 205
Abdul Latif, 136, 137, 140, 151
Abdul Majid, 47
Abdul Qadir, 151
Abdul Rahman Khan, 93
Abdul Rasul Khan, 49
Abdul Wakil Khan, 54
Abdulla Khan, Lala, 64, 67
Abdur Rahim Khan, 152, 156
Achakzai, 152
Achin, 15
Afghan Bank, 221
Afghan Parliament, 192
Afghanistan, 1, 2, 6, 10, 15, 19, 72—74, 80—87, 169, 172—175, 193—202, 210, 213, 215—221
Ahmad Ali, 24
Ahmad Shah Abdali, 73
Ahmad Shah Khan, Sardar, 86
Ahmadzais, 34, 105, 110, 118, 129, 156, 207
Ali Abad, 187
Ali Ahmad Jan, 20, 27, 51—69, 82—84, 98
Ali Khel, 156, 162
Ali Shah Khan, Sardar, 140
Aliadad, 163
Allah Nawaz Khan, 119, 156, 158, 159
Altamoor, 129, 135, 142, 143
Aman Ullah Khan, H. M., 1, 2, 5, 10, 15—20, 24, 25, 36, 38, 39, 41, 47, 51—67, 75—77, 81—83, 91, 100, 105, 106, 121, 124, 125, 151, 182, 190, 195, 202, 209, 212, 214
America, 175
Amir Habib Ullah, 42
Amir Habib Ullah Khan, H. M., 74, 75, 105
Anjuman-i-Adabi, 188
Arg, 12, 29, 31, 32, 37, 41, 43, 49, 52, 69, 159—162, 168, 129
Asmai, 159
Ata-ul-Haq, 42

B

Babrak Khan, 113
Bacha Saqao (Saqaoists), 5, 12, 18, 21, 24—45, 47, 49, 53—101, 121—168, 180, 202, 207

Bagh-i-Bala, 30, 32, 34
Bala Deh, 118, 119, 122
Bala Hisar, 184
Bani Umayya, 194
Barg, 130
Bari Kow, 56
Bedak, 126
Belgium, 175
Bini Hisar, 159, 160
Bombay, 29, 81
Bostan Serai, 47
Britain, 175, 211
British Government, 212, 213, 217
British Legation, 34
But Khak, 55, 63

C

Caliphate, 84
Caves of Mullah Omar, 55, 56
Central Asia, 153
Chahar-Asyah, 4
Chaman, 68, 205
Chaman-i-Hazoori, 160
Chamkani, 156
Chankhawah, 115
Char Deh, 159
Charkh, 126—128, 133
Chehl Satoon, 159, 162

D

Dobandi Pass, 150, 157
Dobandi, 86, 130
Dakka, 16
Darbar, 127, 128, 220
Dari Khel, 101, 114, 118, 135
Darvesh, 126, 127
Dean's Hotel, 40
Deh Mozang, 151
Dost Mohammad, Qari, 49
Durrani, 62

E

England, 187

F

Faqir Mohammad, 136
Farah, 63
France, 117, 175, 187

G

Gardez, 92, 99, 107—114, 118—126, 135. 140—156.
Gardezis, 207
German Government, the, 214
Germany, 175
Ghaus-ud-Din, 34, 106, 129—131
Ghaus-ud-Din, Mir, 126, 127, 128
Ghazi, 22
Ghazni, 59, 63—67, 125
Ghilzais, 30
Ghulam Nabi Khan, 152, 153
Great Britain, 175, 211

H

Habib Ullah, 137
Habib Ullah, Amir, 42
Habib Ullah Khan, 49
Habib Ullah Khan, H. M. Amir, 74, 75, 105
Habibia College, 29, 31, 161, 186

Hamid Ullah, 38, 42, 154
Hanafi School, 171
Hayat Ullah Khan, Sardar, 47
Hazaras, 66, 91
Hazrat-i-Shor Bazar, 40
Hedjaz, 215
Herat, 62, 66, 91, 97
Hindu Kush, 25
Holy Quran, 193
Home Minister, 42

I

Id, 90, 103, 104
Inayat Ullah Khan, Sardar, 13, 39, 40, 60
Independence Day, 151
India, 40
Indian, 77
Islah, 150, 152
Islam, 29
Islamic Law, 172

J

Jabl-us-Saraj, 25, 29
Jadran, 111, 207
Jagdilak, 55, 64,
Jahandad Khan, 106
Jaji, 109, 126, 140, 148, 154, 165, 205, 207
Jalalabad, 1, 16, 18, 52, 54
Jamiat-ul-Ulama, 190
Jan Gul Khan, 156
Japan, 175, 214
Jehad, 14, 48

K

Kabul, 1, 4, 5, 20, 23—29, 36, 38, 41, 45, 53—71, 74, 80, 85, 90, 97. 106, 137—142, 154, 178
Kafir Koh, 34, 35, 37
Kai, 15
Kaisar-i-Hind, S. S., 79
Kajja, 153
Kalakan, 20
Kalola Pushta, 31, 32
Kandahar, 40, 54, 57, 59, 61—70, 84, 91, 97, 106, 151, 205, 206
Kandaharis, 62, 63
Karez-i-Darvesh, 154
Karim Khan, 64, 65
Katghan, 136
Khairkhana Pass, 29
Khogianis, 18, 56
Khost, 88, 93, 104, 106, 204
Khushi, 86, 125, 130, 157
Khyber Pass, 15, 16
Kiran, 43
Koh Daman, 97
Kohati, 151

L

Laghman Valley, 51
Lala Abdulla Khan, 64, 67
Levannai, 114
Logar (Lohgarh), 126, 127, 144, 207
Logar (Lohgarh) Valley, 131

M

Mahmand, 57, 122
Mahmud Khan Yawar, 17, 18
Mahmud Sami, 53
Majlis, 190
Majlis-i-Ayan, 191
Majlis-i-Shura-i-Milli, 191
Makoolat, 183
Malik Mohammad Jan, 56
Malik Mohsin, 42, 45
Mangalis, 108, 205
Mangals, 108, 109, 142
Manzil Bagh, 65
Maranjan Hills, 159, 160
Mazar-i-Sharif, 62, 91, 152, 153
Mehr Dil Khan, 152
Mirza Mujtaba Khan, 42
Mirzaka, 142, 156
Mohammad Agha, 158, 159
Mohammad Akbar Khan, 155, 204—206
Mohammad Alam Khan, 19
Mohammad Aziz Khan, Sardar, 72
Mohammad Ghaus Khan, 91
Mohammad Gul Khan, 53, 122, 159, 201, 207
Mohammad Hashim Khan, Sardar, 57, 64, 72, 79, 89, 121, 122, 153, 201
Mohammad Ibrahim Khan, 91
Mohammad Nadir Khan, H. M., 3, 49, 72—90, 93—131, 133—225
Mohammad Qasim, 98, 152
Mohammad Rafiq Khan, 118
Mohammad Sadiq Khan, Hazrat, 39
Mohammad Shah, 56
Mohammad Siddiq, 42, 92, 98, 113, 118, 119, 134, 135, 140, 141
Mohammad Usman Khan, Sardar, 39, 47
Mohammad Yusuf Khan, Sardar, 73
Mohammad Zahir Khan, H. R. H. Prince, 221
Mohammadzais, 73
Moin-us-Saltanah, 42
Moslem World, 195
Mullah Abdulla, 212
Mullahs, 29

N

Naib-us-Saltanah, 42
Naji-i-Millat, 224
Nasrullah Khan, Sardar, 1
National Assembly, 193
Nau Burjah, 34
Nawab Khan, 156
Nimla, 17, 18, 23
Noor Mohammad Khan, 88

O

Omar Caves, 56
Orakzai, 155, 204
Orgoon, 115, 116

P

Paiwar Pass, 75
Parachinar, 20, 21
Paris, 77
Payindah Khan, Sardar, 73
Persia, 175, 186
Peshawar, 7, 20, 57
Pinni Beg, 127
Postal Exchange, 215
Prophet Mohammad, 193, 194
Purdah 7, 171

Q

Qatghan, 92, 153
Qita-i-Namuna, 20

R

Rais Tanzimia, 24
Rome, 68
Russia, 175

S

Sabari, 110
Sadiq Khan, Hazrat Mohammad, 39
Sadozais, 73
Sahak, 144
Salam Khana, 163
Sang-i-Navishta, 159
Sari Kul, 153
Sari Roza, 115, 116
Sayed Hussain, 25, 28, 29, 35, 42, 153
Sayed Sharif Khan, 88
Scout movement, 187
Serai Khoja, 29
Shah Mahmud Khan, Sardar, 75, 86, 88, 109, 130, 140, 143, 147, 150, 154, 156, 161, 201, 206.
Shah Wali Khan, Sardar, 49, 72, 75, 79, 89, 108, 118—120, 140—145, 157, 160, 161, 201, 206
Shehr Ara, 29. 30, 161
Sheikhabad, 64
Sher Ahmad Khan, 18, 19
Sher Darwaza, 159
Sher Jan, 42, 43, 64, 86, 92, 98
Shiga, 148
Shinwaris, 15, 18, 19, 24, 28, 56
Shirkat-i-Ashami, 221
Shoora-i-Milli, 171, 176
Sijinak, 129—133, 143
Slavery, 189
Soviet Government, 211
Soviet Russia, 215
Speen, 157
Suez Canal, 79
Sulaiman Khel, 101, 116, 124, 135
Sultan Mohammad Khan, Sardar, 73
Surkhab, 130

T

Taj Mahal Hotel, 68, 80
Tarzi, 19
Thal, 75
Tirah Pass, 129

Tor, 157
Totakhels, 156, 207
Turkey, 187
Turkish Ambassador, 211
Turkomans, 152
Turrah Baz Khan, 127

U

U. S. A., 187
Ulya Hazrat, 61
Urgoon, 92

V

Verdak, 63—67, 91

W

Wagho Jan Pass, 157, 158
Wali Ali Ahmad Jan, Wana, 75
Wazir Refugees, 104
Waziristan, 75, 104, 20
Wazirs, 105, 205—207
Western Asia, 6
White Fort, 142

Z

Zalmae Khan, 126, 136
Zarghoon Shehr, 130, 136
Zirak, 115
Zulfiqar Pass, 153
Zurmat, 115, 117

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